



KTC

John Kiesler

SIGNS AND INSTRUMENTS OF LIBERATION

*The Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR) and a
Contextual Theology of Religious Life from 1966 until 1991*

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SIGNS AND INSTRUMENTS OF LIBERATION

The Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR) and a Contextual Theology of Religious Life from 1966 until 1991

Een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de Godgeleerdheid

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Abbreviations

AA	Apostolican Actuositatem
AFER	African Ecclesial Review
AG	Ad Gentes
CA	Centesimus Annus
CD	Christus Dominus
CEBS	Latin American base communities
CELAM	Latin American Episcopal Conference
CL	Christifideles Laici
CLAR	Latin American Conference of Religious
CNBB	Brazilian Episcopal Conference
CONFER	Spanish Conference of Religious (magazine of the conference with the same name)
CRB	Brazilian Religious Conference
CRIS/SCRIS	Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes
DV	Dei Verbum
EE	Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as applied to Institutes dedicated to Works of the Apostolate
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi
ES	Ecclesiam Suam
ES I/II	Ecclesiae Sanctae I & II
ET	Evangelica Testificatio
GS	Gaudium et Spes
LC	Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation
LE	Laborem Exercens
LG	Lumen Gentium
LN	Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation
MC	Mystici Corporis
MM	Mater et Magistra
MR	Directives for Mutual Relations between Bishops and Religious
OA	Octogesima Adveniens
PC	Perfectae Caritatis
PME	Pro Mater Ecclesia
PO	Presbyterum Ordinis
PP	Populorum Progressio
PT	Pacem in Terris

REB	Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira
RC	Renovationis Causam
RHP	Religious and Human Promotion
RM	Redemptoris Missio
SEDOC	Serviço de Documentação
SRS	Sollicitudo Rei Socialis

Preface

During my regrettably brief stay among the Akimel O'Otham in Arizona, I learned, at least on an intellectual level, that all life moves, acts and exists in a magnificent web of being. Everything is inter-connected, although we seldom take the time or effort to realize this. At no time has this become clearer to me than in doing the research for this study. Without the help and assistance of many people, it would have been impossible to finish what often seemed a daunting task.

I would first of all like to thank my dissertation director, Professor Jacques Van Nieuwenhove. Through dialogue with him, my interest in CLAR and especially the *comunidades insertas* was first sparked. An area which surprisingly little attention has been paid in the scholarly literature on religious life and liberation theology. But I owe far more than the choice of this topic to Professor Van Nieuwenhove. Over a period of four years, he took a personal interest in the study and challenged me constantly to be precise, exacting and critical. He gave me the freedom to make mistakes as well as the wisdom of his experience. I shall always be indebted to what he has taught me, not only intellectually, but as a model of a theologian who combines passion for the poor with scholarship and a critical perspective.

Along with Professor Van Nieuwenhove, I have been blessed to have a co-director Professor Arnulf Camps, ofm. His welcoming responses to my letters were in no small reason why I chose to study at Nijmegen. I am grateful to him for his ongoing support for my research, his hospitality, and willingness to share his vast experience on missiology, the Franciscan life and the practical questions which arise in the preparation of a doctoral dissertation. His fraternal concern and optimism were great examples for me of a Franciscan who loves the Gospel and is intellectually active with difficult theological concerns.

As a member of the friar minors from the California province, I thank our provincial Joseph P. Chinnici for his continuous support for this project, as well other bros whose letters, visits and prayers were always a source of joy.

During my stay in Nederland, I have been blessed by contact with friars from the Dutch and Flemish provinces. In particular, I would like to thank Provincial Jan van Duijnhoven, Wim Moons, and the friars of the St. Bonaventure Franciscan

community (Nijmegen) where I have lived for five years. My special gratitude goes to Gerard Ris and Leo Soede (guardian and vicar respectively of the community) and the late Jan van de Pavert. The diversity of the Nijmegen friar community, their varying life experiences, interest in my study, and patience with my somewhat erratic student life schedule were great gifts.

The search for CLAR literature took me to a variety of locations both within Europe and in Latin America. The generosity and understanding which I encountered was wonderful, not only simplifying my task, but allowing contact with many wonderful people. Thus I would like to thank heartily for their support and understanding: Sister Hilda van der Houwe the librarian at the Collegium Pro America Latina (Louvaine, Belgium), Wiel Creemers, ofm (former director) and Joost van Weesenbeeck from AMA (Oestgeest, Netherlands), Hubert Frank of Adveniat (Essen, Germany), Missionzentrale der Franziskaner (Bonn, Germany), Missio (Aachen, Germany), Sr. Maureen O'Brien and the rest of the staff at SEDOS (Rome) and the CRB in Rio de Janeiro as well as Recife.

During my stay in Brazil, I had the privilege of staying with the Franciscan community at Petrópolis. I shall never forget the hospitality and friendship with which I was received. I should especially thank Fr. Geraldo Freiburger, Ludovico Garmus, Simão Voigt, Nilo Agostini, Constantine Koser and the friar-students whose energy and faith was an inspiration.

Other individuals who assisted me in one way or another either in Brazil or in locating materials there: Clodovis Boff, Bernardino Leers, ofm, Sr. Lenita de Argollo Mendes, ofm, Ed Metz, ofm, Walfrido Mohn, ofm, Carlos Palacio, sj, Donna Glen Rossi, and Edênio Valle, svd. Sister Dorotéia Diederichs, ihm not only shared her experience with me but helped me to make contact and personally visit several *comunidades insertas* in the Recife area. Finally, Sister Hermanegarda Alves Martins who graciously agreed to talk with me about her long contact with CLAR. The information which she supplied was a very important confirmation and supplement to my research on CLAR. Sister Martins' spirit and faith was, however, a far greater gift than any information which I learned from her.

Several people were important although they had no direct role in the intellectual work of this study. Thus, I would like to thank my mother, my father who walks in the Light, my brothers Bob and Bill, Therese, my sister-in-law, as well as Bobby and Kristen. Also words can never express my gratitude for the friendship and love which I have received from my 'Dutch family' – Eliane, Amir, Darius and Isabelle.

Finally, I dedicate this study, for all its faults, to the brave women and men religious who live in the *comunidades insertas*. Their life shines forth as an example of religious life that unabashedly embraces the poor Christ in the suffering and offers a prophetic witness of the Gospel so necessary in our times. May these inserted religious continue to 'Walk in Beauty'....

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Introduction

0.1 The problem

Religious life has been a frequent topic for theological reflection after the Second Vatican Council. Theologians from the every continent have offered their views on the religious life and how it can adapt itself in the light of a changing world and evolving ecclesial understanding.¹

One common denominator which runs through these reflections, however, is a general perception that religious life is in crisis and facing serious challenges, although these are understood differently. For some theologians religious life is in an identity crisis following the rapid changes after the Second Vatican Council. Many previous understandings held by religious about themselves, their role in the Church and their relationship with human society have been radically shaken. Religious life is seen as challenged to find a new identity.²

Yet other theologians frame the challenge differently. For them, the challenge is whether religious life has, in fact, a future. Pointing to the relatively few vocations, especially in countries of the First World, some see the demographics as threatening religious life. Fewer new members and an increasingly older population point to a possibility that religious life, especially women religious, faces extinction.³

Another group of theologians sees secularization as religious life's greatest challenge. In the early years after the Council, religious were seen as uncritically

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- 1 P. Kalilombe, "Religious Congregations Facing the 21st Century," *AFER*, vol. 29 (1987): 298-308. R. Mejia, "Foreign Missionaries at the Eve of the African Synod," *AFER*, vol. 35 (1993): 144-152. Mejia compares religious missionary congregations to international multinationals. T. Balasuriya, *For a Third World Theology of Religious Life*, Quest Series 84 (Colombo: Centre for Society and Religion, 1985). M. Azevedo, *Vidas consagradas. Rumos e encruzilhadas* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1993).
 - 2 D. Nygren and M. Ukeritis, "The Religious Life Futures Project: Executive Summary," *Review for Religious*, vol. 52 (1993): 6-55 (a nationwide study of almost 10,000 religious in the United States). R. Fitz and L. Cada, "The Recovery of Religious Life," *Review for Religious*, vol. 34 (1975): 690-718.
 - 3 H.R. Ebaugh, "The Growth and Decline of Catholic Religious Orders of Women Worldwide: The Impact of Women's Opportunity Structures," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 32 (1993): 68-75. P. Wittberg, "Residence Stability and Decline in Roman Catholic Religious Orders of Women: A Preliminary Investigation," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 32 (1993): 76-82.

embracing the lifestyle, mentality and values of the modern secular culture. This has resulted in decadence and a loss of religious life's essential elements. In response to the challenges facing religious life there are no lack of proposed solutions. Theologians have seen religious life as in need of: re-founding, re-interpretation, re-weaving, and re-imagining. Yet in spite of all these theological reflections, the crisis in religious life persists with no end in sight.⁴ It is understandable why religious have been the subject of so much theological attention throughout the world. Religious represent a large percentage of the Church's clergy and on some continents (e.g. Latin America, Africa and Asia) come close to being a majority. Added to these priest-religious are the overwhelming number of religious, the non-ordained men and women, who work in parishes, schools, hospitals and ordinary jobs alongside the laity.⁵

As the topic of so much concern for theologians, it is not surprising that in 1991 Pope John Paul II announced that the 1994 Ninth Synod of Bishops would focus on religious life. It was the Pope's hope that the Synod would help religious resolve identity questions so that they could become an active force in a New Evangelization.

In preparation for the 1994 Synod a *Lineamenta*⁶ is written which offers a clear perspective of religious life as plagued by:

- confusion about identity (*Lin 28a*);
 - the acceptance of secular values and movements such as feminism and secularization (*Lin 28b; 29*);
 - the need for inculturation in local cultures (*Lin 30; 32c*);
 - conflict with the hierarchy (*Lin 28c*);
 - a weakening of religious' congregations ability to evangelize due to the acceptance of modern values (*Lin 28a,b; 29e*);
 - problems brought by decreasing vocations (*Lin 28d; 32a*);
 - an interpretation of the option for the poor and evangelical poverty which understands religious life in the light of social analysis and praxis for the poor.
- This can result in equating activity for the poor as, "the only basis for under-

4 G. Arbuckle, *Out of Chaos. Refounding Religious Congregations* (Mahweh: Paulist Press, 1988). C. Palacio, *Reinterpretar a vida religiosa* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1991). M. Leddy, *Reweaving Religious Life. Beyond the Liberal Model*, 4th ed. (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991). S. Schneiders, *New Wineskins. Re-Imagining Religious Life Today* (Mahweh: Paulist Press, 1986).

5 J. García Martin, "Presencia-participación de la vida consagrada," *Commentarium Pro Religiosis et Missionariis*, vol. 75 (1994): 168-169. Father Martin tells us that in 1992 there were 144,770 religious who are ordained (compared to a total of 259,871 diocesan clergy), 65,526 brothers and 882,111 sisters. The relation of secular priests to religious: Africa, 11,655 (10,072); Asia, 20,028 (15,598); Latin America, 30,796 (24,574 but excluding Central America these figures are: 19,501 and 18,239 respectively).

6 *The Consecrated Life and its Role in the Church and in the World. Lineamenta* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992). Hereafter as *Lin*.

standing the nature of consecrated life and its apostolic service in the Church and in the world.” (*Lin 29b*).⁷

However, the *Lineamenta*’s portrayal of religious life is not totally negative. There is praise for religious life which since the Second Vatican Council places: more stress on fraternal life, greater attention to the Bible and the need for a personal relationship to Christ, an awareness by congregations of their founding charisms, and a desire to serve the Church’s needs. The *Lineamenta* views the *comunidades insertas* positively although a danger is seen that these can become ideological, divisive or forget the ‘essential elements of consecrated life’ (*Lin 26; 44c*).⁸

Based upon international responses to the *Lineamenta*, a *Work Document* was written as a basis for the Synod deliberations.⁹ The *Lineamenta*’s bleak picture of religious life was replaced with a more balanced one. Nonetheless the challenges which the *Lineamenta* points out remain: a lack of certainty about identity (*IL 18; 25*), the negative influence of modern values and movements (*IL 26*), the need for inculturation (*IL 93-94*), tension with the bishops (*IL 25-26; 72*), problems over evangelization by religious congregation (*IL 25*), decreasing vocations (*IL 24; 28*) and an interpretation of the option for the poor which can become ideological (*IL 23; 25; 104*).¹⁰ The *Work Document* also praises the *comunidades insertas* though again not without noting the problems which surround their practice (*IL 23-24; 56*).

The *Work Document* pays more attention than the *Lineamenta* to the geographical diversity of religious life. While most religious congregations are international in character, they also confront challenges which flow from different geographical and cultural contexts. In Latin America religious are seen as being a major force for evangelization and have striven to defend the poor’s rights. Challenges are also apparent: tensions between bishops and religious, the growth of religious sects, growing power of mass media and the few numbers of indigenous religious (*IL 29*).

7 The English translation is unclear, translating social analysis as “assessment of facts and concrete social situations”. The Latin text is “. ut studia conferrentur potissimum erga pauperes, initio capto ab analysi realitatis et a concreta condicione sociali Non semper tamen huiusmodi nusus in rem deducti sunt debita prudentia evangelica, immo interdum analysis realitatis et studium sociale adhibita sunt ut instrumenta interpretandi naturam vitae consecratae eiusque servitium apostolicum in Ecclesia et in mundo ”

8 *Comunidad inserta* is a community of religious who live among the poor Cf ch 8 and ch 9. In this study, I retain the Spanish term rather than an English translation (inserted community) for two reasons First in English the word ‘insertion’ can have a negative connotation Second, inserted communities are well known and sometimes discussed by religious, at least in the United States, but the understandings given to the term vary and almost never agree with Latin American usage.

9 *La vida consagrada y su función en la Iglesia y en el mundo Instrumentum Laboris* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994) Hereafter *IL*

10 The option for the poor while yielding benefits “has produced in some an ideological and political option [leading] to a loss of identity”. The English translation of this text, as well as others used in this study, is my own unless otherwise stated

The Ninth Synod of Bishops gathered from October 2-29, 1994 and hopes that the delegates would arrive at a solution for the challenges facing religious life were quickly dashed. Among the delegates to the Synod, there is agreement only on the fact that religious life is facing problems. As to the causes and recommended solutions, a variety of opinions surfaced. For some bishops, religious life was in a state of chaos, lacking identity and in need of stricter discipline, both internally and in relations with the hierarchy. Others saw the situation quite differently. Far from being in state of disorder and anomie, religious life was described as making small but important steps away from past elitism towards increased contact with the people, bringing a new sense of mission, fraternity and spiritual renewal.¹¹ While some may have been disappointed about the lack of agreement by the Synod on the religious life, it should not be surprising. If anything, the delegates were following in the footsteps of the Second Vatican Council which likewise had a great amount of difficulty understanding religious life.¹²

The difficulty in understanding religious life and, for the Synod, the challenges it faces is partially the result of recent developments. In the last fifty years new forms of religious life have arisen which cloud former understandings. Secular institutes,¹³ the order of virgins,¹⁴ and the recent rise in non-canonically recognized communities¹⁵ are attempts to fashion a religious witness which is understandable and relevant to the modern world. But these new forms of religious life also have different understandings about their life and role in the Church's mission.

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- 11 K. Romer, "Consecrated Life requires Formation," *L'Osservatore Romano* 19 October 1994, English ed., p. 8. O. Quevedo, "New Forms of Religious Life in the Philippines," *ibid.*, p. 9. Two contrasting views between Bishop Romer of Brazil and Archbishop Quevedo from the Philippines.
 - 12 X. Rynne, *The Third Session* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965): 208-15. This discusses the Vatican Council's deliberation around *Perfectae Caritatis*.
 - 13 The secular institutes are recognized by Pius XII in *Provida Mater Ecclesia* (1947). D. O'Connor, "Two Forms of Consecrated Life: Religious and Secular Institutes," *Review for Religious* vol. 45 (1986): 205-219. O'Connor shows several key differences between secular institutes and religious. Most interesting is the rather odd canonical status of secular institutes. According to the current 1983 Code of Canon Law, the institutes have a canonical status but members do not, they remain lay or cleric (CIC 215, 711).
 - 14 This is rarely commented upon but adds a new wrinkle to discussions about the nature of religious life. These women make a vow of virginity, which the Council saw as a hallmark of religious life, but belong neither to a canonical institute nor live in community. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Ordo Consecrationis Virginum*, SEDOC (1970-71) 837-840. A May 31, 1970 decree which re-instates the consecrated virgin into the Church. This was done in response to a request by Vatican II (*Sacrosanctam Concilium* 80). For more information see: D. Desautels, "An Early Church Rite Revised: Consecrated Virgins Living in the World," *Review for Religious*, vol. 49 (1990): 567-580. E. Rees, "Consecrated Virginity," *New Blackfriars*, vol. 63 (1982): 229-236.
 - 15 J. Vranckx, *Pelgrims voor een nieuwe tijd: Jonge bewegingen in de Kerk* (Leuven: Davidfonds, 1991).

Additional difficulty flows from the fact that the theology of religious life has been in a rapid state of flux. Spurred by the Second Vatican Council, past theologies of religious life are seen as outmoded and in need of renewal. To further complicate the issue new terms have entered theological discussions since the Council (e.g. charism of the founders, option for the poor) whose meanings often lack precision.¹⁶

Any attempt by theologians or bishops to understand religious life has, furthermore, to face its vast variety. While one can speak of the 'religious life', the term gives a false impression; as if there is only one form of 'religious life'. In fact, religious life is composed of thousands of congregations, male and female, which have arisen, evolved and in some cases disappeared over the course of time. These congregations have often had radically different understanding of religious life and its mission. Likewise, they have been engaged in a variety of different activities from ordained ministry to teaching, from nursing to farming, from waging war as warrior knights to bridge builders and from itinerant preachers to university teachers.

It is this variety which, for one theologian, plagues any attempt to find key or essential elements for religious life. In the face of such a long history with diverse forms of life and mission, it is difficult to find common elements which unite all religious.¹⁷

Finally, anyone who seeks to understand religious life is confronted with its peculiar status within the Church. Most religious congregations are international and have pontifical exemption from the direct authority of the local bishop. Yet at the same time religious work in local churches alongside diocesan priests in meeting the pastoral and evangelization needs of the local Church.

Theologians, the Pope, and the Synod have pointed to religious life in the Church as facing challenges. These challenges are international and involve the self understanding, ecclesial identity, social activity and evangelization by religious who are an important force within the Church. It is a relevant problem which remains for religious congregations, local churches and the Pope.

0.2 Question & hypothesis

Over the last thirty years there has been a wealth of theological reflection from Latin America. With the rise and evolution of the various theologies of liberation new insights and ways of theological reflection have emerged which differ from more traditional Western European forms. Liberation theologians sought the creation of a new relationship between Christian faith and the Latin American

16 The charism of the founders is the best example. The phrase first appears in *ET 11* (1971).

17 F. Wulf, "Fenomenologia da vida religiosa," in *Mysterium salutis: A Igreja. Vida e estruturas na Igreja*, vol. IV/6, eds. J. Feirer and M. Loehrer (Eisiedeln: Benziger, 1965-1981; Petrópolis: Vozes, 1977): 123-125 (page references are to reprint edition).

social reality. Instead of legitimating a *status quo* of injustice, liberation theologies tried to link faith to a praxis for social change and the liberation of the poor.

Within this context of so much theological activity the question arises if new theological understanding of the religious life and its connection to evangelization have been forged. Can one identify a Latin American contextual theology of religious life? If so is there also a new form of religious community which has been born? These questions are the focus of this study.

Latin America is enormous and the amount of theological literature defies anyone who attempts to study it all. Therefore, in a search for a Latin American contextual theology of religious life, this study limits itself to the work of the Latin American Confederation of Religious (CLAR). As a further limitation, CLAR's activity and reflections are followed from CLAR's initial reception of the Second Vatican Council (1966) until the suspension of the CLAR Statutes by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (1991).

It is the hypothesis of this study that CLAR articulates a contextual theology of religious life and its relationship to evangelization. Through its efforts to implement the Second Vatican Council, Medellín and Puebla, CLAR discovers the need for an authentic Latin American theology of religious life. CLAR furthermore eventually supports a Latin American form of *comunidad inserta* which is dedicated to evangelization and liberation of the Latin American poor.

0.3 Choice of CLAR

CLAR's importance as a focal point for this study can be justified in several ways. CLAR is a unique organization of importance to the Latin American Church and religious. Canonically established by the Sacred Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes on March 2, 1959 as a *cosa grata* for the Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM),¹⁸ CLAR was given a twofold task: the promotion of religious life in Latin America and collaboration with CELAM.¹⁹ As a federation of 25 national conferences of religious in Latin America, CLAR has no binding or juridical power. Nonetheless, CLAR as an institution can initiate and promote discussion on issues of concern for all Latin American religious. An additional reason for CLAR's importance lies with its role of advocacy. Although lacking juridical authority, CLAR should not be seen as powerless. Rather, CLAR as an institution takes strong positions in advocating and furthering the renewal of religious life in Latin America. Some of these positions, as shall be seen, are controversial and lead to conflict, highlighted by the magisterial intervention into CLAR's government.

18 "Historia de un servicio," *Nuevo Mundo*, vol. 116 (marzo-abril 1984): 126.

19 *Estatutos de la CLAR, XI Asamblea General de la CLAR. México, febrero 19-28 de 1991. Documento 1, Article 2.*

0.4 Materials

This study uses as a primary source of literature the publications of CLAR from 1966 until 1991. Four different types of CLAR publications are used in this study. This variety provides for a more comprehensive and fuller understanding of CLAR's theology of religious life as well as the challenges which it saw as calling for response by Latin American religious.

First, because CLAR is a federation of national conferences, this study uses the reports from various CLAR meetings. Most important are the annual General Board (Junta Directiva) meetings²⁰ and triennial General Assembly (Asamblea General), which is CLAR's highest legislative body.²¹ Within this category are also included CLAR regional meetings and gatherings around a specific topic. While these cannot speak officially in the name of CLAR, they nonetheless provide insights into challenges facing Latin American religious.

A second important type of CLAR publication are its books, most of which are grouped into four collections.²² Within these collections there is a wide diversity, some books are the result of official CLAR studies while others represent only the position of individual theologians.

Third, this study relies on two CLAR periodicals. *Boletín CLAR* is the official CLAR monthly newsletter which reports on the activities of national conferences and, after 1972, prints articles by individual theologians. Another periodical, *Retos*, was an occasional publication of the CLAR Secretary General and had a very brief existence (1986-1989). Its importance lies in the fact that *Retos* was designed as a publication for the religious in *comunidades insertas*.

Finally, this study uses the work done by the CLAR theological team or the CLAR Secretary General which are never published.

Within this literature, a distinction is made between two types of publications. CLAR, as previously stated, fulfilled two roles: as a forum for discussion and an advocate of certain positions. For this study it is important to distinguish the two

20 *Estatutos de CLAR, Articles 20-24*. The General Board (Junta Directiva) is composed of the President of CLAR, the three vice presidents (one cleric, one lay brother, one sister), the Secretary General and the presidents of each national conference. Normally the entire General Board meets once a year in order to hear the President's annual report, review finances and progress reports on the implementation of the proposals from the previous General Assembly.

21 *Estatutos de la CLAR, Articles 13-19*. L. Patiño, "Qué es la CLAR?" *Boletín CLAR* 10:9, no. 9 (septiembre, 1972): 1. The General Assembly (Asamblea General) is the highest legislative body of CLAR and meets every three years to set policy and elect the president, vice presidents and the secretary general. The General Assembly was originally composed of the General Board and three delegates from each nation. The revised CLAR Statutes change this to two delegates per country and if there are two separate conferences in one nation (e.g. in Argentina, Costa Rica and Venezuela where there is a separate conference for men and women religious) then one delegate from each.

22 Until 1991 there are 60 books in the *Colección CLAR*, 17 in the *Colección Perspectivas CLAR*, 6 in *Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización*, and 3 in the *Colección Palabra y Vida*.

because while some publications give insights into Latin American religious life, they do not represent an official position of CLAR.

In 1972, then CLAR Secretary General Luis Patiño says:

“Once the [General-jk] Assembly or the General Board has spoken and approved a theme, after the entire preceding process, then one can speak of a *CLAR Document*.”²³

This study follows the above understanding of an official CLAR document with one addition. In 1974, CLAR created an official team of theologians, composed of members from throughout Latin America, who were invited to membership by the CLAR leadership. The CLAR theological team’s purpose was to reflect on specific issues, suggested by the CLAR leadership or the CLAR General Assembly. Some of the CLAR theological team’s studies are approved by the General Board or General Assemblies, making them official documents, but others are not. Because of its select membership and the nature of its work, this study considers the studies of the CLAR theological team as official documents of CLAR.

Yet within the CLAR literature a problem must be recognized. CLAR develops its contextual theology of religious life in a very difficult period in Latin America’s history. From the late 1960s until the 1980s political repression was a daily fact of life and one which religious had to consider in expressing their views. Added to the political situation was an ecclesial context which after 1972 was increasingly hostile to liberation theology and CLAR. There existed a fear that some bishops would attempt to use CLAR’s studies and reports as an excuse for disciplinary sanctions against it. Both as a consequence of the political situation and the ecclesial context, CLAR is often circumspect in its discussions. This poses a problem for any study of CLAR, but not an insurmountable one. Through a careful analysis of the CLAR materials as well use of the reports for the less publicized General Board meetings, CLAR’s efforts and theological views become clear.

To ensure the clearest presentation possible of the issues which CLAR faced, this study also uses material from *Convergência*²⁴ and reports from Brazilian meetings of the *comunidades insertas*. These provide a fuller and deeper understanding of the *comunidades insertas*, which CLAR discusses but without a clear presentation of their origin or variety.

0.5 Methodology and terminology

In order to determine if CLAR had shaped a contextual theology of religious life, it is first necessary to have an understanding of what is a contextual theology.

23 L. Patiño, “Qué es la CLAR?” p. 4; (“Una vez que la Asamblea o la Junta Directiva de la CLAR se han pronunciado y han aprobado un tema, después de todo el proceso precedente, entonces sí se puede hablar de un *Documento CLAR*”).

24 *Convergência* is the official publication of the Brazilian Conference of Religious (CRB).

While a contextual theology can be seen as the result of a process of contextualization, no agreement exists as to what that entails.²⁵ For some, it is the translation of the Gospel into another culture, while other theologians understand contextualization as a deep integration by the Gospel into a culture.²⁶

Jacques Van Nieuwenhove and Berma Klein Goldewijk provide one theoretical structure for understanding a contextual theology. For them, contextualization is an ongoing process of reflection by a faith community upon their life, the Bible, and Christian Tradition, using their own cultural thought categories and manners of expression. Within this general description, four key elements of a contextual theology are identified. First, a faith community is subject of the process of contextualization. While theologians articulate, systematize and help guide later developments, it is the community which creates the contextual theology. Second, some form of social science is used for the interpretation of the social, political, ecclesial and cultural context. As Van Nieuwenhove and Klein Goldewijk note, there is no consensus about which social science is most appropriate for this interpretation. Some theologians advocate the use of Marxist social analysis, others the use of cultural-anthropology and several feminist critics challenge both of these approaches as tainted by sexist presumptions. Third, the perspective of the poor is selected as a theological hermeneutic. Finally, it must be asked in what sense the contextual theology is liberative and relevant to the specific context and relates to global issues.²⁷

These four elements are used in this study as criteria and a framework against which the CLAR literature can be analyzed to determine if and how CLAR has formulated a contextual theology:

- a a faith community can be identified as subject of theological reflection;
- b if social science is used to analyze the context;
- c a theological hermeneutic is chosen;
- d its theology is relevant to Latin America and liberating. By relevance is meant the attempt by theology to identify the 'signs of the times'. This study uses the terms 'liberation' and 'liberating', unlike Van Nieuwenhove and Klein Goldewijk, in two senses. First both terms refer to a general need for socio-political emancipation of the oppressed in Latin America. But neither CLAR nor this

25 J. Upkong, "What is Contextualization?" *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionwissenschaft* vol. 43 (1987): 161-168. S. Coe, "Contextualizing Theology," *Mission trends* no. 3, eds. G. Anderson and T. Stransky (Mahweh: Paulist Press, 1976): 19-24.

26 S. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992). K. Haleblan, "The Problem of Contextualization," *Missiology* (1983): 95-111. L. Luzbetak, "Signs of Progress in Contextual Methodology," *Verbum SVD*, vol. 22 (1981): 39-51. R. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985): 1-16. D.J. Hesselgrave and E. Rommen, *Contextualization, Meanings, Methods and Models* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).

27 J. Van Nieuwenhove and B. Klein Goldewijk, "Derde Wereld Theologie als contextuele theologie," chap. in *Theologie in de context van de Derde Wereld*, eds. J. Van Nieuwenhove and B. Klein Goldewijk (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1993): 4-16.

study searches out concrete strategies for the achievement of this socio-political liberation. Rather CLAR seeks to formulate a theology of religious life which would free religious for active participation in the poor's struggle of liberation. Thus in this second sense, 'liberation' and 'liberating' have a more narrow meaning, namely how CLAR tries to liberate religious life from internal life structures, ways of thought, and pastoral activities which prevent active support for the poor's liberation;

e and if its theology relates to global issues.

The choice of this understanding of contextual theology is justifiable for several reasons. First, Van Nieuwenhove and Klein Godewijk focus on the contextual theologies which have recently emerged from the Third World. Within that context, they see the rising awareness of the poor's lot and the social structures which enslave them as a central hallmark of our time which theology should not ignore. Second, this understanding of contextual theology also makes explicit the ambiguous role of religion within the Third World. Religion can either be ideologically manipulated and in complicity with social injustice or become a force which assists the liberation of the poor. Finally, this study finds Van Nieuwenhove and Klein Goldewijk's understanding intriguing because they state that contextual issues, which Third World theologians face, cannot be isolated from global issues, such as a new planetary awareness and modernization. Every contextual theology, while facing unique problems and challenges, also shares a common global context in a world divided between developed First and impoverished Third World. Overcoming this division is more than the task of a local theology but necessitates addressing concerns which bridge contexts. Furthermore, in a search for identity Third World theologians encounter the increasing power and disrupting potential of modernization.

This view of contextualization can furthermore be applicable to CLAR and its twenty-five year long process of theological reflection. CLAR is reflecting theologically in Latin America, plagued by social injustice and oppression of the Third World. Within the 1960s and 1970s there was within Latin America a rising awareness of this social injustice which led to the formation of many movements and political parties for the liberation of the poor. Finally, Latin American religious are facing global challenges. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, religious life throughout the world had to wrestle with issues of social and ecclesial identity. CLAR's theological reflections cannot avoid these issues since they touch the core of religious life identity.

The methodology for this study involves two steps. First, there is an analysis of CLAR's reflections on religious life and its connection to evangelization. Over a twenty five year period CLAR's reflections evolve and assume a clear and coherent vision of religious life in relation to Latin America. Second, in the light of the Vatican intervention, key points of CLAR's theology of religious life are shown to contrast with magisterial views. This contrast flows from rival interpretations of the Second Vatican Council on certain issues.

This study focuses on CLAR and its efforts to forge a contextual theology of religious life for Latin America. Some may object that this is impossible. How can a contextual theology of religious life be forged for a context as broad as Latin America with so many different nations, cultures and historical backgrounds? Interestingly, this is a question which CLAR had to address very early in its reflections. At the Fourth General Assembly (Santiago, 1970), CLAR President Manuel Edwards gives his answer,

"It is clear that there are large differences which exist between our nations (as well as within them); but that does not prevent there being a common background. It is very important to know this so that similar situations yield experiences which others can benefit.

It is, therefore, possible to reflect, coordinate, promote at the Latin American level taking advantage of [our-jk] forces. That is what CLAR seeks to achieve...."²⁸

This study follows President Edward's (and CLAR's) assumption that there is enough similarity within Latin America so that one can seek a contextual theology of Latin American religious life.

Finally, in order to avoid misunderstandings a few terminological clarifications are necessary. This study has a broad understanding of religious life and thus is unconcerned about the canonical distinctions between orders, congregations, and apostolic societies. These distinctions are unimportant for the study. Similarly, this study uses the word congregation to refer to all canonically recognized religious institutes, again without following the canonical distinctions.

Additionally, some distinguish various aspects of a charism of the founder/ess, such as a founder/ess' personal charism, a 'charism of the congregation' or a 'charism of the institute'. While these distinctions can be highlight various aspects of a charism of the founder/ess, they can also be confusing and somewhat arbitrary.²⁹ For the purpose of this study, 'charism of the founders', 'congregational charism', 'founding charism', and 'foundational charism' are used synonymously.

A distinction is made in this study between 'evangelization' and 'pastoral works (or pastoral activity)'. While these two cannot be completely separated in practice, it is necessary for this study to make a distinction between them, especially in the light of the plurality of understandings for 'evangelization'. By pastoral works, this study understands those activities which are focused primarily on the pastoral

28 M. Edwards, "Informe del presidente IV Asamblea General," *Boletín CLAR*, 8: 1-2 (enero-febrero, 1970): 6; ("Es claro que son grandes las diferencias que existen entre uno y otro de nuestros países [como también existen dentro de un mismo país]; pero eso no impide que haya fondo común que es muy importante conocer situaciones semejantes que proporcionan experiencias aprovechables por otros. Es posible así reflexionar, coordinar, promover a nivel latinoamericano aprovechando fuerzas. Es lo que busca realizar la CLAR...").

29 A. Romano, *The Charism of the Founders* (Middlegreen, United Kingdom: St. Pauls, 1994): 129-161.

care of an established Catholic community as existing in parishes or other established ecclesial structures. Evangelization has a broader concern, namely to bring the Gospel to those beyond the borders of these established structures. Thus the difference then is between the *ad intra* focus of pastoral works and the *ad extra* focus of evangelization.³⁰

0.6 Plan of study

This study is divided into five parts, framed by four key events for CLAR and Latin American religious: the Second Vatican Council, the Second and Third General CELAM Conferences (Medellín [1968] and Puebla [1979]), and the 1989-1991 papal intervention into CLAR's government.

Part I looks at the period between 1966 and the II CELAM gathering in Medellín. This is a period in which CLAR initially receives the results from the Second Vatican Council. During this brief two year period certain important issues emerge, though without systematic treatment. There is a general recognition that the Council has asked religious to alter their relationship to 'the world' and become a clear eschatological sign in word and deed. But in order to be such a sign of the Kingdom it becomes apparent that religious life's internal life structures as well as its external pastoral work must change.

Medellín is a springboard which launches a deepening process of reflection. Part II analyzes how the results of this conference are received and give impetus to CLAR's reflections until Puebla. Part II is divided into two sections. In Section I, attention is given to the period from Medellín until 1974. During this time, religious try to understand more fully the socio-political and cultural context of Latin America. Three separate perspectives appear in CLAR literature, each of which views the Latin American context differently. Of interest is that each perspective links religious life renewal with the need by religious to make a concrete response to what are understood as the principal challenges facing Latin America. The year 1974 represents an important turning point for CLAR after which there are no longer three different perspectives for viewing the Latin American reality. Instead, CLAR accepts one of these, the dependency perspective, as most applicable to Latin America. With the use of the dependency analysis, the socio-political and cultural reality of Latin America is seen in structural terms as placing special challenges before religious life and its evangelization. CLAR seeks to make Latin American religious signs and instruments of liberation in a continent under the yoke of oppression. Finally, it is during this period that the tensions between CLAR and CELAM become apparent, brought on partially as a result of their radically different visions of Latin America and evangelization.

30 Pope John Paul II acknowledges a similar distinction between *ad intra* and *ad extra* 'missionary activity' although he is reluctant to make a rigid separation between the two (RM 34).

Part III offers an intermezzo, a short break, from CLAR's reflections in order to analyze the *comunidades insertas*. Although these communities are mentioned in CLAR literature, there is no in-depth discussion about their origin and development. Nor is it apparent in CLAR's discussions that there are different types of *comunidades insertas*. After careful analysis, these differences are shown as well as the common features, shared by all *comunidades insertas*. CLAR endorses an authentically Latin American form of *comunidad inserta*, which strives for evangelization and the active advancement of the poor's liberation.

Part IV returns to CLAR's reflections on religious life and its evangelization. It treats the period from after Puebla (1979) until the first intervention into CLAR's government by the Vatican (1989). This is in many ways the high-water mark period of CLAR's reflections. It is a time when CLAR crystallizes and deepens its vision of Latin American socio-cultural reality. After Puebla, CLAR also becomes an ardent advocate of the *comunidades insertas* which are the source for many of CLAR's reflections and questions about religious life.

Part V focuses on the conflict between CLAR and the Vatican, beginning with the first intervention in 1989. The background leading to the intervention is discussed as well the possible reasons for the action. As a way of conclusion central issues, viewed as points of contention between CLAR and the Magisterium, are analyzed in order to determine if CLAR had fashioned a contextual theology of religious life. Finally, CLAR still functions and continues its reflection on Latin American religious life. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for this study to end its consideration of CLAR with the tragic events surrounding the Vatican interventions. Thus the Appendix briefly points out several key directions in CLAR's reflections, even as it was restrained and under the supervision of a Papal Delegate, until 1994.

Part I

Emerging issues between the Second Vatican Council and Medellín (1966-1968)

Introduction

Part I traces CLAR's initial reception of the Second Vatican Council until the II CELAM Conference Medellín (1968). During this short period of time, CLAR tries to understand the meaning of the Council's results for Latin American religious life and its evangelization. Yet understanding and clarity on the conciliar decisions prove elusive for the Council has offered many contrasts to pre-conciliar theology in: ecclesiology, mission, the importance of the sciences and the Church's relationship with the 'world'. For this reason, until Medellín, CLAR's reflections give no systematic treatment of religious life and evangelization. Instead, within CLAR discussions there is a search to understand the Council and how Latin American religious can apply it to their life and evangelization. A consequence of this search is that a diversity of approaches are apparent for central issues. Nonetheless, this two year period cannot be ignored or judged as worthless. On the contrary, certain key issues emerge that will dominate CLAR's reflections until 1989.

CLAR's reception of the Second Vatican Council does not occur in a vacuum. Just as CLAR is searching for clarity about the conciliar results so also is the entire Latin American Church. For this reason CLAR is influenced by the results from the 1966 CELAM meeting at Mar del Plata (Argentina). Also important is the papal encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, addressing issues of international development and justice.¹ The social and political climate of Latin America also exerts an influence upon CLAR's reception of the Second Vatican Council. There appears a growing awareness within Latin America that the social reality is marked by radical inequalities between rich and poor. Political activity to redress this situation increases both from moderate Christian Democratic parties and, more significantly, from various Marxist organizations, which seek radical social change.

Mar del Plata

The Second Vatican Council encourages the Church to forge a new relationship with 'the world' but a special problem is created for Latin America. The Council's view of the world reflected the socio-economic and political reality of Western

1 "Importantes conclusiones de la Junta Directiva de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 5:10 (diciembre 1967): 3. This Seventh Board Meeting (Lima) recommends several documents to the national conferences for reflection by religious: *Populorum Progressio*, the results from Mar del Plata and CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación de la vida religiosa en América Latina*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 1 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1967).

Europe and North America.² Within the Latin American Church a recognition appears that many issues, important for Latin America, were scarcely mentioned by the Council. Therefore, it is seen as necessary to interpret the Second Vatican Council for the unique reality of Latin America in which the Church is facing concerns about development, social change and massive poverty.³

An early attempt to make a Latin American interpretation of the Council occurs at a 1966 CELAM meeting in Mar del Plata. At this preparatory meeting for Medellín, a group of bishops along with invited experts discuss the "Development and Integration in Latin America".⁴

At Mar del Plata, the bishops use *Gaudium et Spes* as a prism through which to view the continent. They see Latin America in optimistic terms and place great hope in the possibility of progress, as *Gaudium et Spes* had also done. The poverty of Latin America is seen as able to be overcome through education and the work of human promotion.⁵

Though borrowing heavily from *Gaudium et Spes*, Mar del Plata also makes several important departures. The bishops state that a change of social structures is necessary in Latin America, because:

"In many cases the existing structures do not allow the participation and integration of the Latin American people and [vast-jk] numbers remain on the margin of business, political, and cultural institutions."⁶

2 E. Schillebeeckx, *Het Vaticaans Concilie* (Den Haag: Lannoo, 1964): 111. A related example comes from Schillebeeckx who states that the Council's interest in the "Church of the Poor" was 'geographically determined'.

3 CERIS, *As responsabilidades de Igreja na América Latina Aspectos teológicos-sociológicos*, CERIS-1 (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1965). A study made at request of Latin American bishops to examine the Latin American socio-political reality and the pastoral situation in order to identify the challenges for the post-conciliar Latin American Church. "Mensaje de 18 obispos del Tercer Mundo, agosto 15 de 1967," *Sacerdotes para el Tercer Mundo*, eds. R. Concatti and D. Bresci (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones del Movimiento, 1972): 37-49. An example of this growing realization is the letter from eighteen bishops (among whom is Dom Helder Camara) who stress that *Populorum Progressio* be read from the Third World context of oppression. They also plead for socialism as an alternative to capitalism.

4 C. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 152.

5 CELAM, *Presencia activa de la Iglesia en el desarrollo y en la integración de América Latina. Conclusiones de la asamblea extraordinaria del CELAM realizada en Mar del Plata (Argentina) del 11 al 16 de octubre de 1966*, CELAM no. 1 (Bogotá: CELAM, 1967). CERIS, *Igreja na América Latina. Desenvolvimento e integração. Assembléia extraordinária do CELAM em Mar del Plata 11 a 16 de outubro de 1966*, CERIS no. 8 (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1968) esp. p. 33-52. This book contains some of the speeches given at Mar del Plata. Especially important is Bishop Marcos Mc Grath (Panama) whose speech describes the theological basis for the Church's support for Latin American development as grounded in *Gaudium et Spes*. The bishop also remarks that *Gaudium et Spes* follows an inductive methodology which he sees as a necessary for theology and the evaluation of pastoral activity.

6 CELAM, *Presencia activa de la Iglesia*, p. 20-23. The quotation is from p. 20, ("En muchos

While socio-political structures should protect private property, Mar del Plata also states that this is not an absolute right but in relation to the common good of all; "the basic right of all to the use of material goods comes before private property."⁷

The bishops at Mar del Plata also emphasize the need for empowering the poor and reject charitable assistance as the only response necessary by the Church. Rather than only addressing the immediate physical needs of the poor, the Church should support the development of the poor.⁸

Finally, Mar del Plata uses an inductive approach for viewing Latin American reality. The bishops adopt the Catholic Action methodology of seeing, judging and acting in viewing the Latin American reality (*ver, juzgar, actuar*).⁹

Populorum Progressio

The 1967 papal encyclical *Populorum Progressio* has a great influence on the Latin American Church.¹⁰ This influence on the Latin American Church is not accidental and one commentator states the encyclical is written especially with Latin American socio-political conditions in mind.¹¹

In the encyclical Pope Paul VI discusses the importance of development and the duty of Christians to support this work. Development is important and, for the Pope, one of the *signs of the times* which the Church cannot ignore (pp 76-80).

Populorum Progressio begins with the declaration that everyone has the right to develop God-given talents as well as any material goods necessary for this development. Yet the development of a person's talents never occurs in isolation but always within a social context. When a society fosters a situation of injustice and poverty, the poor's rights to development are violated (pp 14-21; 36).

After treating the right of each person to personal development, *Populorum Progressio* then discusses the broader issue of economic development. Just as

casos, las estructuras existentes no permiten la participación y la integración de las poblaciones latino-americanas y las grandes masas permanecen al margen de las instituciones empresariales, políticas, sociales y culturales").

7 CELAM, *Presencia activa de la Iglesia*, p. 20.

8 CELAM, *Presencia activa de la Iglesia*, p. 32-34.

9 CELAM, *Presencia activa de la Iglesia*, esp. p. 13, 20, 24, 29, 32, 35, 38. A comment is in order about the inductive methodology of Mar del Plata. Each section of the final document begins with reference to a conciliar document, mostly *Gaudium et Spes*, and then there is a reflection on the Latin American reality or some pastoral need. Thus while Mar del Plata stresses the need to use the Catholic Action methodology (*ver-juzgar-actuar*), it uses not sociology but Church documents as a starting point.

10 *Boletín CLAR* 6:7 (julio 1968): 4-5; (A study day on *Populorum Progressio* in Colombia attracts 1,000 women religious). *Boletín CLAR* 6:3 (marzo 1969): 7; (A similar gathering for the religious of Ecuador). Editions from the *Boletín CLAR* until 1972 often contain news items without author or title.

11 P. Lermoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," in *Puebla and Beyond*, eds. J. Eagleson and P. Scharper, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1980): 9.

goods must be available to all in a society for personal development so should there also be a sharing of resources on an international level. The Pope states that developed nations have a duty to help poorer nations to economic development. This help can include direct monetary assistance, planning and the removal of trade barriers which limit poorer nations' access to markets (PP 45-49; 56-61).

While this sharing of resources should occur, Pope Paul sees a world in which it is not happened. The Pope describes the world as split between a few rich nations and the vast majority of countries which are extremely poor (PP 8-9; 29). He says that this situation is one which 'cries to heaven' (PP 30; 66) and threatens the peace of all nations (PP 9; 30-31; 76-80).

Populorum Progressio also identifies several obstacles which prevent the needed assistance to poorer nations. For the Pope, a mistaken understanding of the right of private property is sometimes an obstacle. He says that private property is never absolute but is for the common good of all (PP 22-24). Related to this is the barrier placed by human greed, nationalism, racism and a lack of solidarity among nations (PP 21; 62-63). Finally, the encyclical warns of a 'new imperialism' by richer capitalist nations which threatens to turn poorer nations into colonies (PP 26; 56-61).

The Latin American socio-political reality

There is much social and political unrest throughout Latin America before the 1968 Medellín Conference. This unrest is the result of social changes as well as a growing awareness about the social injustice present in the Latin American social and political structures.

The process of urbanization and industrialization which began in earnest after the Second World War accelerates with drastic consequences. Throughout Latin America, the mechanization of agriculture and the hope of employment in factories drive *campesinos* from the countryside to large urban areas. These emigrants leave behind their traditional ways of life and family ties, encountering instead the hectic, rapid and impersonal pace of urban life. Unfortunately, employment in the cities proves difficult to obtain and, if found, provides only a minimal salary with no security. As a result the economic condition of most emigrants remains one of abject poverty, and most are, by necessity, forced to live in slum areas without adequate water, sewage and electricity.¹²

12 C. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, p. 75, 90-91; (Smith says that the percentage of urban residents in Latin America [in cities larger than 20,000] jumps from 39% [1930] to 67% of the population between 1950 and 1960. Smith also notes the rapid increase in industrialization from 1947 until 1961). Dom J.C. Cornelius, "Missão e urbanização," *Convergência*, vol. 57 (maio 1973): 215-225; (In Brazil the percentage of urban residents increases from 31.24% [1940] to 45.08% [1960] of the population).

A growing awareness of the socio-political reality of Latin America accompanies these social changes brought by urbanization and industrialization. There is a general awareness that the Latin American social and political structures need radical change. Some support such a change as the only alternative to a Communist revolt. But others seek radical social change for the creation of a more just society and the elimination of the inequalities between the rich and poor in Latin America.¹³

Yet differences surface over how to accomplish social change. Some see the Christian Democratic parties as the means for bringing justice to the social order as well as a way to prevent a Communist ascension to power. The elections of the Christian Democratic Presidents Eduardo Frei (Chile, 1964) and Rafael Caldera (Venezuela, 1968) are initially seen as a hopeful signs that change could occur within the existing political systems. Unfortunately, both Christian Democratic governments fail to live up to the high expectations which many placed upon them. Once in power philosophical differences divide the Christian Democrats over how to implement social change. Christian Democracy is revealed as having no unified philosophy for social change.¹⁴

For other people, the traditional political parties are judged as ineffective and unable to produce social change in Latin America. There is a rise of political movements which see the solution to Latin America's socio-political reality as lying in radical structural change. Through harnessing the political power of the poor these movements (popular movements) hope to shape a just and socialist society. But for a small minority, a socialist society can only be achieved through violent revolution. As a consequence rural and urban guerrilla groups spring up throughout Latin America.

This growing political awareness is also reflected in the Latin American Church. Similar divisions appear about how to best effect social change: through political parties or radical socialist means. Camilo Torres, who dies in 1966 as a guerrilla fighter in Colombia, becomes a symbol which threatens those who advocate peaceful change and questions the radicals as to how far they would commit themselves for social change in Latin America.¹⁵ This increased activity brings

13 C. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, p. 90-94, 153-155. Smith offers some statistics about the gap between the rich and poor in Latin America which demonstrate the seriousness of the situation. In 1968 the richest 5% of the population controlled 31.4% of the total national income (the poorest 20% only 4.5%). Land ownership also reflects this inequality. According to 1950 statistics 1.2% of Argentines owned 41.43% of the land. The figure is similar in other Latin American countries: in Bolivia where 8.1% owned 95.1% of land, in Brazil the figures were 14.58% and 64% of land, and Mexico where 1.34% of the population controlled 89.43% of the land. Also in: T. Bruneau, *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974). E. de Kadt, *Catholic Radicals in Brazil* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970): 51-121.

14 F. Turner, *Catholicism and Political Development in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1971): 24-27, 45-46, 238-242.

15 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 14, 20.

to the forefront the question of the limits of the political involvement by religious.¹⁶

Finally in 1964, the Brazilian military seizes power claiming that the action was necessary to prevent a Communist takeover. Soon many radical leaders, political and religious, are expelled from Brazil as undesirable.¹⁷

Crisis in religious life

Religious life is in crisis. Many religious, especially the young, are increasing dissatisfied with community life structures which focus more on legalism and formalism than the creation of authentic fraternal life. An additional source of dissatisfaction is that the existing religious cloisters are seen as a barrier which blocks contact by religious with the average Latin American. The cloister is also criticized as encouraging religious to remain aloof from the concerns and problems of Latin America¹⁸. Finally, religious conclude that existing community life regulations and structures are de-humanizing, especially in the exercise of religious obedience.¹⁹

CLAR: The promotion of religious life renewal in Latin America

In 1964 the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes gives CLAR the responsibility for the promotion of the renewal and adaptation of Latin American religious life.²⁰ The CLAR leadership at their 1965 General Board Meeting (Junta Directiva) requests the advice of theologians on how fulfill this responsibility. In response, the CLAR Secretary General invites a group of theologians to a meeting at Rio de Janeiro (November 1966)²¹ which produces a final document that is officially endorsed by the 1966 CLAR General Assembly (Mexico).

The General Assembly considers this document so important that CLAR publishes and distributes it throughout Latin America. With this decision the *Colección CLAR* series is begun, the first of many published CLAR reflections on the religious life and evangelization.²²

16 C. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, p. 16-17. "Junta Directiva 1967," *Boletín CLAR* 5:12 (diciembre 1967): 1-3. The question of political involvement by religious surfaces early within CLAR. At this VIII Junta Directiva, the limits of participation by religious in both government programs and political movements are questioned without any answer.

17 C. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, p. 115.

18 R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia y para el mundo," in *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1968): 27-28.

19 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 28-33, esp. p. 32.

20 M. Perdía, "Memoria: XXV años de la CLAR [XX Junta Fortaleza, Brasil]," *Boletín CLAR* 22:4-5 (abril-mayo 1984): 11.

21 CLAR, "Participação do encontro de reflexão teológica. Rio de Janeiro 28/10-5/11/1966," mimeo, p. 1-5. Among the participants at this meeting are J.L. Segundo, J. Marins, C. de Lora, J.S. Croatto, R. Poblete, R. Muñoz, W. Tepe, A. Gregory, G. Deelen, and F. Houtart.

22 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 7-8.

1 CLAR's initial reception of the Second Vatican Council (1966-1968)

1.0 Introduction

This section reviews the CLAR's initial reception of the Second Vatican Council. During this brief two year period before the Medellín Conference there are few CLAR publications²³ and no systematic treatment of either the religious life or its evangelization. There are, nonetheless, attempts at applying the Second Vatican Council's teachings to Latin America. These attempts reveal a diversity of opinion in addressing several issues, viewed as important.

1.1 Latin American reality

There is an awareness that religious life is remote from and largely ignorant about the day to day reality of the Latin American people. In CLAR discussions, there are initial attempts by religious to more fully understand the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality. Nonetheless, concern for the Latin American reality is not yet a major center of attention.²⁴

An unclear reality

The awareness of the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality is, before Medellín, unclear and filled with random images, which nevertheless point to issues of concern.

The inequality in Latin America between the rich and the majority poor is recognized. The first CLAR study, *Renovación y adaptación* takes note of this inequality which is described as containing "social and cultural segregation between the rich

23 In addition to *Renovación y adaptación*, there is the *Boletín CLAR* and B. Villegas et al., *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969). While *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales* is published after Medellín, it was written beforehand, containing no references to the CELAM Bishop's Conference. For that reason, this study treats *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales* as a document from the initial reception by CLAR of the Second Vatican Council.

24 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 34-36. Only a few pages are devoted to the Latin American social reality. B. Villegas et al., *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales*. Here only one essay (of three) deals with the social reality.

and poor" in which the poor are as if in a different world, "the world of the poor."²⁵

A more complete view of the Latin American reality appears in *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales*, which contains a sociological perspective from Francois Houtart, Cecilio de Lora and Renato Poblete. According to these three sociologists, Latin America is in a process of development which brings with it increased urbanization, secularization and economic changes.²⁶ Ultimately, this process of development challenges Latin American societies to radically break with their feudal past. Existing ways of life and social institutions are viewed as inadequate in the face of this process and require adaptation in order to respond to the needs of the people.²⁷

Although the process of development is viewed as challenging, it is also seen as offering the possibility for a radical improvement in the lives of most Latin Americans.

The large concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few is seen as grounded on social values which are antiquated and cannot survive the development's call for increased productivity. An improvement is anticipated for Latin American society through the growth of a middle class and the possibility that "the lower class finds new means of [social-jk] ascension through entrance in the process of industrialization."²⁸

Theological relevancy of sociological analysis

Within CLAR there is a brief discussion on the possible use of sociology for a clear and scientific vision of the Latin American social reality. The use of sociology is seen as theologically justifiable for two reasons. An initial reason flows from the Council's call that the Church should become a servant to humanity. If the Church in Latin America wishes to serve the people then it has first to discover their needs. But this is not easy and therefore sociology is advocated as a means for the discovery of the needs of the Latin American people.²⁹ Sociology is viewed as necessary for another reason. Through sociological analysis, religious and the Church can discern the *signs of the times* in Latin America. The use of sociology is recommended as "a first theological step" in any such discernment.³⁰

25 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 34.

26 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina: Consideración sociológica," in *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969): 41-44.

27 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 44.

28 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 43.

29 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 41; (gs 43 is cited).

30 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 41.

1.2 Identity of religious

There are within CLAR clear attempts to understand the Council's teaching on religious life. Concern develops around the eschatological witness, religious consecration, the following of Jesus, and the evangelical counsels.

The eschatological witness of religious

Attention is given to the eschatological witness of religious life, which allows others to see in religious some partial reflection of the future Kingdom's fullness. Within CLAR this witness is seen, even during this pre-Medellín period, in communal terms. It is the religious community as a whole, rather than individual religious, who must make a public testimony of the Kingdom.³¹

The eschatological witness is seen as placing two different demands upon religious communities. First, the eschatological witness should be plainly visible to others in the normal daily activity and behavior of a religious community. To do so religious community life has to reveal an authentic fraternity which places God above all else.³² Linked to this is a second demand, namely that religious draw close to the people. Only through closer contact, an incarnation among the people, can the eschatological witness of religious communities become understandable.³³

But several challenges prevent a clear eschatological witness by religious in Latin America. An initial challenge is the public image of religious life. For the vast majority of the people, religious are viewed as having little knowledge or interest in their daily life. Worse still, religious are identified with the rich upper classes who benefit from the existing social *status quo*. Coupled to this is a second challenge, namely the public witness of religious communities. For most Latin Americans religious life is dominated by formalism and rigid internal structures which are remote from the people's understanding of human community.³⁴

To meet these challenges change is seen as necessary for religious communities. In order to increase contact with the people changes in the community cloister and a more flexible daily schedule are recommended. Pastoral activity is seen as another way of improving the religious' eschatological witness. Through increased pastoral work and support for development projects, religious can demonstrate their concern for the average Latin American, overcoming an image of indifference.³⁵ Finally, change in the internal life structures of religious communities is required in order to witness an authentic fraternity. Through a stress on dialogue

31 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 13. R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia y para el mundo," in *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales*, p. 33-35.

32 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 13-16; (pc 15 is cited).

33 R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 32; (reference to LG 39; 42; 44). CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 42.

34 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 38-39.

35 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 16-17.

and subsidiarity, there is a belief that this change in religious community structures can occur.³⁶

Religious consecration

Within CLAR discussions there appears an acceptance of the Council's teaching that the consecration of religious is related to the common baptismal consecration of all Christians.³⁷ Nonetheless, there are two differing interpretations about this relationship.

A first interpretation attempts a synthesis between the traditional understanding of religious life and the conciliar teaching. Religious are viewed as having a "special consecration that is based in the baptismal consecration and expresses it more fully." At the same time, this interpretation maintains the pre-conciliar understanding, seeing religious life as "a more perfect following" of Christ.³⁸ In this way the religious consecration is understood as a more perfect form of Christian life, though now with a clear link to baptismal consecration.

A second interpretation rejects any form of synthesis between past understandings of religious life and the Council's teaching. For Ronaldo Muñoz, too many problems plague any attempted synthesis. An initial problem revolves around the past theologies of religious life which Muñoz views with suspicion. Not only did these theologies understand religious as a more perfect form of Christian life, but they also taught the need for religious to flee 'the world', separating themselves from the socio-political cultural reality. An additional problem is that before the Council the theologies of religious life were dominated by a juridical and legalistic perspective, giving little attention to its spiritual dimensions.³⁹

After mentioning these problems Muñoz gives his interpretation of the relationship between religious and baptismal consecrations. He states that religious consecration is a particular form of Christian life which serves the Church and human society. Through consecration religious serve the Church as a sign and instrument of the Church's mission and eschatological future. At the same time religious consecration enables service to the needs of others as a continuation of God's saving work.⁴⁰

The following Christ

Within CLAR there is also a clear awareness of the Council's declaration that the norm for religious life is the following of Christ. Yet there is uncertainty about the meaning of the following of Christ and two different understandings appear which place different demands upon religious.

36 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 13-16, 31, 45-48.

37 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 9; (cites PC 5). R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 30; (Muñoz cites LG 7; 9; 32; 39-41).

38 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 9; (reference is made to PC 5).

39 R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 27-29.

40 R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 28-33, esp. 30; (LG 9 and GS IV are cited).

A first interpretation appears in *Renovación y adaptación*. In this CLAR study the following of Christ is described as demanding that religious incorporate within their life and actions the attitudes of Jesus. Religious are called upon to love, be disponible to others, and make God the center of their life.⁴¹

Ronaldo Muñoz offers a different interpretation. He does not see the following of Christ in terms of the acquisition of spiritual and ethical attitudes. Rather, for Muñoz, the following of Christ challenges religious to measure their life and activity against the example of Jesus. In this way the following of Jesus demands a constant process of conversion, using Jesus' life as a concrete model for how religious should live and act.⁴²

The evangelical counsels

Within the CLAR discussions there appears no complete treatment of the three evangelical counsels or their significance. However, insights are given on obedience and evangelical poverty which are the sources of much tension for Latin American religious.

Two concerns arise over religious obedience. A first concern is to emphasize that obedience remains necessary for the smooth functioning of a religious community. Yet at the same time concern arises about its actual practice in religious communities. Religious superiors are seen as sometimes acting in an autocratic manner, a fact which causes much dissatisfaction by religious. Subsidiarity, increased community dialogue and more training for religious superiors are seen as measures which can eliminate abuses in the exercise of religious obedience.⁴³

Another source of tension for Latin American religious is evangelical poverty. Within the CLAR discussion, there appear two different understanding for this evangelical counsel. A first understanding sees evangelical poverty as the communal sharing of goods by individual religious.⁴⁴ However, for other religious this understanding is insufficient in the Latin American context where so many live in abject poverty. Thus for this second understanding, evangelical poverty has to include some form of material poverty, individually and communally. At the 1968 Eighth General Assembly of the Brazilian Religious Conference, there is a discussion on the meaning of evangelical poverty and one religious wonders if it is "to sacrifice the possession of goods or to participate in the possessions and condition of the poor."⁴⁵

While disagreement exists about the understanding of evangelical poverty, several ways of practicing it are mentioned. One suggestion is that religious accept paid employment as a way of drawing closer to the people and sharing their life.

41 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 9; (p. 1 is cited).

42 R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 34.

43 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 28-33.

44 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 36.

45 "De las conferencias nacionales," *Boletín CLAR* 6:4 (abril 1968): 2; ("...sacrificar la posesión de los bienes o ...participar de los bienes y la condición del pueblo necesitado").

Another recommendation is that religious communities move from large pastoral institutions in which they work. Through a separation between their place of residence and pastoral institution, it is believed that a religious community could offer a clearer public witness of poverty, difficult when living in a large school or hospital.⁴⁶

Concerns about the vow of evangelical poverty continue. The issue is viewed as so important that the 1967 CLAR Seventh General Board Meeting (Lima, Peru) recommends an official study on evangelical poverty.⁴⁷

Ecclesial position of religious

Even during this early period the People of God is the dominant ecclesiological image in CLAR reflections.⁴⁸ Part of the attraction for this image is explained by Ronaldo Muñoz. He sees in the People of God an understanding of the Church which stresses the equality of all Christians and the fact that religious can no longer claim superiority over the laity.⁴⁹

Another ecclesiological image which appears in CLAR discussions is the Church as the sacrament from God. For Béltran Villegas, this vision of Church has a definite effect on the relationship between religious and the hierarchy. In a short reflection, Villegas sees this sacramental Church as composed of two separate poles, institutional and charismatic. The hierarchy represents the institutional pole, which has authority from Jesus' grant of power to the Apostles. This institutional pole of the Church focuses on the preservation of order and the maintenance of the sacramental system. Contrasted to this is the charismatic pole, which receives its authority directly from the Spirit. The charismatic pole is less concerned with Church structure and gives flexibility and variety to the Church. For Villegas, the religious life belongs to the charismatic pole of the Church.

This distinction between the institutional and charismatic poles of the Church has an important consequence. For Villegas, from the institutional and charismatic poles flow different services and ministries for the Church. Yet in spite of this fact, Villegas adds that the charismatic and institutional poles should neither be seen in opposition to one another nor as a denial of the bishop's authority over all forms of ecclesial service.⁵⁰

46 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 37; (reference is made to *pc* 13).

47 "Importantes conclusiones de la Junta Directiva," p. 3.

48 In *Renovación y adaptación* the image of the Church as People of God predominates. Also: R. Muñoz "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 30-33. B. Villegas, *Boletín CLAR* 6:5-6 (mayo-junio 1968): 4-5. Villegas stresses this ecclesiological image at a meeting of the secretariats for the national conferences of religious.

49 R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 30.

50 B. Villegas, "La visión renovada de la Iglesia como marco de la vida religiosa," *La vida religiosa, aspectos doctrinales*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969): 17-22. B. Villegas refers to Karl Rahner without a direct citation. Surprisingly he makes no reference to *LG* 7-8; 12.

Finally, Villegas criticizes the hierarchy. He says that bishops have often appeared as "counter signs to the Kingdom" and further that "The Magisterium and government in the Church are a witness of the carnal condition and not the future presence of the Kingdom."⁵¹

1.3 The pastoral of the Church and religious

Within CLAR there is a realization that Latin American religious should assume greater responsibility in the pastoral activity of the Church. This realization is the result not only of the Council's teachings but also the Latin American ecclesial context where religious are about 80% of all pastoral workers.⁵²

Challenges to the Latin American pastoral

There are several challenges in the socio-cultural reality of Latin America which any pastoral activity by religious must face.

An initial challenge is that many people equate the faith with the observance of laws and regulations. This situation is seen as flowing from improper or inappropriate catechism. Thus religious are challenged to provide the Latin American people with a basic formation in the faith.⁵³

A related challenge flows from the limits of the existing pastoral activity by the Church. Some social groups, especially the poor and intellectuals, are not reached by the Church's pastoral activity.⁵⁴

The process of development is viewed as presenting a special challenge for the pastoral activity of religious. In order to support this process, religious communities are called upon to assist the economic and social development of Latin America, especially of the poor.⁵⁵

Finally, there is a challenge from the Church's shortage of pastoral workers in Latin America. The number of priests are few, resulting in many parishes without a resident priest or see one only occasionally.⁵⁶

1.3.1 Pastoral approaches

In response to these pastoral challenges two general approaches can be identified. What is striking is that each approach places a different value on the existing pastoral structures of religious congregations.

51 B. Villegas, "La visión renovada de la Iglesia," p. 18; ("Magisterio y gobierno son, en la Iglesia, un testimonio de su condición carnal, y no una presencia anticipada del Reino").

52 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 11-12. R. Muñoz, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 30-33.

53 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 46-47.

54 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 34. "Importantes conclusiones de la Junta Directiva de la CLAR," p. 1-3.

55 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 36-37. F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 47-50.

56 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 45.

A first approach begins from the perspective of the existing pastoral structures. From this approach, there is a recognition that existing parishes, hospitals and schools should change in order to reach previously ignored social groups and support the development of Latin America. To accomplish this, religious should adopt new forms of service alongside existing pastoral works. But the existing pastoral structures are judged as viable, able to respond to any new pastoral challenges and thus not requiring change.⁵⁷

A second approach does not seek primarily to expand the influence of existing pastoral structures but to give a clear response to the process of development. This approach judges the existing pastoral structures as outdated and unable to respond to modern challenges. The reason for this is that the process of development is seen as bringing radical changes to the Latin American socio-political and cultural context. One consequence of this is that the Church is no longer the dominant social force in Latin America. This fact calls into question the existing pastoral institutions, which were created when the Church was the principal social power in Latin America.

The process of development is also seen as radically shifting the approach to any evangelization in Latin America. With development comes a new focus on the individual and his/her improvement, concerns which existing pastoral structures do not share. For this approach, religious in their pastoral work should support the development of Latin America. To do this, the starting point is not the perspective of the existing pastoral structures but an analysis of the socio-political and cultural reality. In this way, religious can discover how their pastoral can concretely aid the development of Latin America.⁵⁸

1.3.2 General traits of a Latin American pastoral for religious

While these two approaches have different views on the importance of the existing pastoral structures, they share common traits in answering the pastoral challenges of Latin America.

Pastoral de Conjunto

It is seen as necessary that religious work with the local Church. Religious congregations are called upon to abandon past attitudes of independence or indifference towards the local diocese and co-ordinate their pastoral activity under the local bishop in a Joint Pastoral Plan (*Pastoral de Conjunto*).⁵⁹ There are a variety of ways in which religious can fulfill an important role in a diocese's Joint Pastoral Plan.

57 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 19-27.

58 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 45-46.

59 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 19-27. The *Pastoral de Conjunto* is a pastoral plan which coordinates the efforts of religious, secular priests and lay workers. *Boletín CLAR* 6:8 (agosto 1968): 4-5. The *Pastoral de Conjunto* is a theme at a meeting of provincials in Buenos Aires.

Formation of the laity is viewed as an important way for religious to support the local Church. Through improved catechesis programs, religious teach the people that religion is more than a set of rules but a source for values which guide daily life.⁶⁰

Formation of the laity is also a way of empowering them. Through formation the laity can be given training for active participation in the Church as catechists and pastoral workers.

Religious can also provide a certain flexibility in the local diocese's pastoral activity. Through accepting new forms of pastoral action, including support for development programs, religious can demonstrate clear support for the people. Nonetheless, this also requires religious to enter into advanced studies and follow training courses in order to obtain professional skills which can assist Latin American development.⁶¹

Finally, religious can provide more pastoral workers for priestless parishes. Because of their large numbers (over 100,000) women religious are seen as having a vast potential to assist the Latin American pastoral work.⁶² Nonetheless, most women religious have had little pastoral experience and little or no theological training. Therefore, many male religious congregations begin pastoral and theological training especially designed for the women religious.⁶³

Insertion in reality

Within CLAR's discussion there appears a perception that Latin American religious are isolated and ignorant about the daily life of the people. This isolation and ignorance is seen as demanding an increased insertion by religious in the Latin American reality. This insertion entails the acceptance of new pastoral activities which bring religious communities closer to the people and their daily life.

Yet, this insertion is understood in very general terms with religious striving to make a pastoral presence in all sectors of Latin American society.⁶⁴ *Renovación y adaptación* gives an example of this, recommending that religious devote special attention to the poor as well as the upper classes. No possible tension is anti-

60 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 46-50.

61 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 20-22, 25.

62 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 25-27. A tension is seen in that some view the work of the women religious as merely supplementary, substituting for unavailable priests.

63 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 27. *Boletín CLAR* 6:1 (enero 1968): 1-2. The Seventh CLAR General Board Meeting (1967) creates a new department in the CLAR Secretariat for women religious. *Boletín CLAR* gives examples of several of these training programs for women religious: *Boletín CLAR*, 6:7 (julio 1968): 3; (Peru for 50 women religious). "I Curso de especialización de liturgia para responsables de la formación," *Boletín CLAR* 6:4 (abril 1968): 8; (A liturgical training course). *Boletín CLAR*, 6:1 (enero 1968): 8; (in Puerto Rico a theology course for educators, and in Guatemala a training program in nutrition). "I congreso mundial de religiosas en ministerio parroquial," *Boletín CLAR* 6:1 (enero 1968): 8; (In Brazil there is a meeting of 60 women religious who work in priestless parishes).

64 CLAR, *Renovación en adaptación*, p. 16.

culated for such an insertion.⁶⁵ The reason for this is that religious see their insertion into the Latin American reality as guided by an attitude that "true charity has as an effect the flexibility of spirit to adapt to each class of circumstances."⁶⁶

Tension between the pastoral and religious community

A final trait for a Latin American pastoral by religious is the recognition of a tension between pastoral work and religious community life. It is seen that the pastoral activity by religious, working from large institutions, can blur the eschatological witness of religious life. This occurs when religious work in schools and hospitals, which require modern equipment and facilities in order to operate effectively. While necessary such facilities give the impression of wealth which is difficult for religious to overcome.⁶⁷ Tension is also apparent around the effects of professional training of religious for the community. The question arises if an individual religious, who works as a professional, can balance his/her work with the restrictions of community life. There is a fear that some religious would place work above the demands of the their community.⁶⁸

65 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 34, 51. It is worth noting that an increased pastoral presence among the poor is viewed as flowing from a theology of incarnation.

66 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 12; ("La verdadera caridad tiene como efecto la flexibilidad de espíritu para adaptarse a toda clase de circunstancias").

67 CLAR, *Renovación y adaptación*, p. 36.

68 F. Houtart, C. de Lora, and R. Poblete, "La vida religiosa en América Latina," p. 49-50.

Part II

Reflections of CLAR and the Latin American religious between Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979)

Introduction

CLAR's reflections before Medellín were examined in Part I. During this short period, concern arose about the challenges which the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality placed before religious congregations. There was also a realization that religious life and its relation to evangelization had been changed by the Council, though a lack of clarity about the consequences for religious. CLAR's reflections do not cease in 1968 but continue through a process of receiving the results from the Medellín Conference. Part II examines CLAR's reception of Medellín and its continuing reflections until the 1979 CELAM Conference at Puebla. Over the course of this 11 year period, 1974 is a turning point in CLAR's reflections and for that reason, Part II is divided into two sections: from Medellín until 1974 (Section I) and from 1974 until the 1979 Puebla gathering (Section II).

CLAR's reception of Medellín

The Medellín Conference acts as a stimulus to the calls by the Vatican Council for the renewal and adaptation of religious life. At Medellín, the Latin American bishops remind religious of the need for renewal and adaptation of their life. But Medellín does more than repeat the Council's appeals and, in fact, refocuses the results of the Second Vatican Council to the context of Latin America. Hearing the Latin American bishops at Medellín, religious are encouraged to continue the renewal and adaptation of their life as well as relating this work to the specific context of Latin America.¹

Bishop Eduardo Pironio, then secretary general of CELAM, writes a letter to CLAR in which he states that after Medellín the Latin American bishops have three expectations from religious. First, there is the expectation that religious are aware of their responsibility to offer a clear witness of the Kingdom. According to Pironio, this requires that religious be "witnesses of invisible goods, prophets of the coming Kingdom."² Second, the Latin American bishops expect religious to

1 CELAM, *Medellín. Conclusiones. La Iglesia en la actual transformación de América Latina a la luz del Concilio. II Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano* (Bogotá: CELAM, 1969). The conclusions from the Medellín Conference are divided into sixteen separate documents of which four (*Justicia, Paz, Religiosos, and Pobreza de la Iglesia*) are most often cited within CLAR discussions.

2 E. Pironio, "Medellín ha dicho una palabra a los religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 7:10 (octubre 1969): 2; ("...los testigos de los bienes invisibles, los profetas del Reino anticipado....").

understand that this eschatological witness should be joined to action. In the light of Latin America's current situation, religious are challenged to serve the Latin American people through action for human advancement (*promoción humana*).³ Finally, for Pironio, the Latin American bishops hope that religious recognize that this eschatological witness cannot be remote from the people or the local church. Instead, religious are called upon to "incarnate themselves salvifically" among the Latin American people and participate in the local diocese's Joint Pastoral Plans.⁴

Like Bishop Pironio, the CLAR leadership also has expectations for the religious after Medellín.⁵ The Eighth CLAR General Board Meeting (Santo Domingo, 1968) studies the results of Medellín and publishes an open letter to all Latin American religious. The CLAR General Board points to four changes which Medellín demands from religious congregations.⁶

– CLAR's leaders state that religious have to change their relationship with the Latin American reality. Isolation from the socio-political and cultural context of Latin America is no longer possible because Medellín asks religious to acquire knowledge about the "state of injustice" which exists throughout the continent. This knowledge should lead religious to support the poor and a denunciation of social injustice.⁷

– Like Bishop Pironio, the CLAR General Board also emphasizes the importance of the action by religious in the human advancement of the people. For the CLAR leaders, this work should not be seen as supplementary to normal pastoral activity but rather as an "integral part of our apostolate."⁸ There are a variety of ways in

3 Pironio does not give his precise understanding of *promoción humana*. At Medellín *promoción humana* is seen as: action which advances all dimensions of a person (*Justicia* 4), allows the realization of one's potential (*Formación* 11), and is especially important in advancement and empowerment of the poor (*Pobreza* 11).

4 E. Pironio, "Medellín ha dicho una palabra," p. 1-2; ("encarnarse salvadoramente"). One of the 16 Medellín documents deals with the Joint Pastoral Plans (*Pastoral de Conjunto*) which try to unite and co-ordinate the efforts of priests, religious and laity in meeting a diocese's pastoral needs.

5 M. Edwards, "Informe del presidente de la CLAR [VIII Junta Directiva, Santo Domingo]," *Boletín CLAR* 7:1 (enero 1969): 3, 8. CLAR sends 21 delegates to Medellín although only the clerics can vote. Often in the *Boletín CLAR* it is not apparent from the titles of the articles alone which are from official reports by a CLAR president or secretary general to the General Assembly or General Board. Therefore, the name of the meeting and its location has been added within brackets for clarity.

6 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva de la CLAR a las conferencias nacionales de religiosos sobre la aplicación de las conclusiones de la Segunda Conferencia General del episcopado," in *Misión del religioso en América Latina*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 5 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969; reprinted in, *Boletín CLAR* 7:1 [enero 1969]): 11-16; (page references are to original).

7 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva," p. 13.

8 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva," p. 13; ("parte integral de nuestro apostolado [*Pobreza* 11]").

which religious congregations can assist in this work of human advancement. However, an important focus of attention is formation for the poor, which includes literacy training and conscientization about the Latin American socio-political reality.

Support for human advancement of the Latin American people also affects the existing educational institutions of religious congregations. The CLAR leaders advise religious to adopt new admission policies for these institutions so that the poor are no longer excluded. Likewise, the school curricula should be changed so that students are taught about the social injustice in Latin America and the need for Christians to serve the poor.⁹

– The CLAR General Board sees Medellín as requiring religious to change their pastoral work. The CLAR leaders ask religious to accept pastoral activity and participate in the Joint Pastoral Plans. Yet participation in the local diocese's pastoral is not enough, for Medellín gives a preference to the poor in the Church's pastoral activity (*Pobreza* 9). For the CLAR General Board, this preference challenges religious congregations to critically review the distribution of their personnel and relocate religious from the cities to rural areas and the peripheries of urban areas.¹⁰ The lifestyle of religious communities is viewed by the CLAR General Board as important for any pastoral activity. Fidelity to evangelical poverty is seen as presenting a clear sign to others of the Gospel's authenticity.¹¹

– Finally, the renewal of religious life is seen as a prerequisite for any response to the human advancement needs and challenges in Latin America. Yet this renewal is seen as complicated by a tension between the need to offer an eschatological witness while simultaneously actively supporting the development of the Latin American people. For the CLAR Board, religious are asked on the one hand to live as "pilgrims of the city of God which remember the relative and transitory character of all earthly things" while on the other hand being "incarnated in the real world", sharing the people's concerns about the social injustice of Latin America.¹²

The importance of Medellín for Latin American religious is reinforced both by CLAR and the national conferences of religious. Sections of the Medellín documents

9 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva," p. 13; (The letter cites the Medellín documents *Paz* 21; 23 and *Educación* 8; 16; 18; 28).

10 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva," p. 14-15; (Texts cited are the Medellín documents, *Sacerdotes* 3 [on the need for a better distribution of religious] and *Religiosos* 14, 28, 29. Also mentioned is *ES* 30-32 [on the need for co-ordination of pastoral activity under the bishop]).

11 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva," p. 14.

12 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva," p. 15; ("peregrinos de la ciudad de Dios que recuerdan el carácter transitorio y relativo de las cosas de la tierra") and ("encarnados en el mundo real").

are reprinted in both *Colección CLAR* and the *Boletín CLAR*.¹³ Added to this are the CLAR seminars. Beginning in 1973, CLAR theologians offer seminars on the socio-political reality of Latin America as well as the need for religious renewal in the light of the Council and Medellín.¹⁴ Finally, the results of the Medellín Conference are discussed by the national conferences of religious.¹⁵

Crisis and renewal of religious life

The reflections of CLAR and the Latin American religious are not made in isolation from the universal Church which is experiencing a worldwide crisis in religious life. After the Council, rapid changes are made in most religious congregations, leaving many religious confused and overwhelmed by the loss of former ways of life. This results in large numbers of religious leaving religious life. Compounding the situation, there is a drop in religious vocations, further reducing the size of most congregations.¹⁶

This crisis is not only the result of rapid change in religious congregations but also due to new theological challenges which surface. Through increased contacts and openness to society, religious begin to radically question their life and traditional community structures. Much of this questioning centers on the three evangelical counsels, especially obedience and poverty.

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- 13 Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed, *Misión del religioso en América Latina*, 2nd ed, Colección CLAR 5 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969) 29-45. *Boletín CLAR* 6 9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1968) 1-4. In this edition of the *Boletín CLAR*, there is a reprint of several sections from Medellín's final documents. Equipo Teólogos de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa en América Latina a partir de Medellín*, Colección CLAR 28 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1976) 12. It is said that the Medellín document, *Los religiosos*, had less impact on Latin American religious than the documents on peace, justice, poverty and the pastoral popular. A. Cussianovich, *Religious Life and the Poor*, trans. J. Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979) 49-50. Cussianovich says that *Los religiosos* is criticized as less concerned with the relation between religious life and the Latin American context than in agreeing with *Perfectae Caritatis*.
- 14 L. Patiño, "Los seminarios de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 13 11 (diciembre 1975) 1-3. The CLAR seminars officially begin July 30, 1973. From 1973 until 1975, 386 religious attend these seminars (254 are women). *Boletín CLAR* 10 1-2 (enero-febrero 1972). The CLAR seminars are sometimes a source of controversy. One example occurs in 1972 when CLAR Vice President Sister Aída López participates in a CLAR seminar at Managua, Nicaragua. After the seminar, she is accused of encouraging religious to assist political revolution. CELAM and SCRIS demand an explanation. In response, Sister López publicly denies that she intended to encourage revolution.
- 15 "Las religiosas argentinas estudian las conclusiones de Medellín," *Boletín CLAR* 7 5 (mayo 1969) 1, 3, 7. "Semana de pastoral sobre los documentos de Medellín," *Boletín CLAR* 7 4 (abril 1969) 7.
- 16 V. Baillo Ruiz, "Análisis sociológico de una crisis. La vida en los institutos religiosos," *Revista de Fomento Social*, vol. 122 (abril-junio 1976) 199-210, and vol. 123 (julio-septiembre 1976) 299-316. G. Pastor, "Reflexiones sociológicas sobre el pluralismo en la vida religiosa," in *Unidad, pluralismo y pluralidad en la vida religiosa*, ed. G. Pastor (Madrid: Instituto Teológico de Vida Religiosa, 1974) 135-183, esp. 135-150.

Another challenge surfaces from new biblical scholarship and undermines a long held belief. It had been claimed for centuries that the religious life was directly instituted by Jesus with the story of the rich young man seen as proof for this. Through research, scholars conclude otherwise and, in fact, declare that there is not one specific reference to the religious life in the Bible.

Finally, the Second Vatican Council declares that all Christians, lay as well as religious, are called by God to a life of holiness. This declaration, while highlighting the value of marriage and the laity, causes many religious to question their life. Has this ecclesial recognition of the universal call to holiness rendered religious life completely superfluous?¹⁷

Attempts are made to deal with this crisis. The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes issues an instruction, detailing changes necessary for religious formation.¹⁸ Of greater importance is Pope Paul's 1971 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelica Testificatio*,¹⁹ which reaffirms the validity of religious life for the Church and the modern world. Finally, in 1978 SCRIS and the Sacred Congregation for Bishops jointly produce *Mutuae Relationes* which tries to clarify to the relationship between religious and the hierarchy.²⁰

General chapters and regional meetings by religious are held, searching for solutions for the crisis. These gatherings become forums where the problems surrounding religious life are discussed and act as an important channel through which reflections of religious from other continents are transmitted to Latin American religious.²¹

Another response arises from the grassroots. Groups of religious, usually three or four, move out of traditional cloisters into houses and apartments, forming small communities (*pequeñas comunidades*). This phenomenon occurs worldwide and represents a concrete response to the new challenges facing religious life. Yet, reaction to the small communities is mixed, for some religious they are a sign of hope but others view them with suspicion.²²

17 X Pikaza, *Esquema teológico da vida religiosa* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1982) 22-34.

18 SCRIS, *Instrucción sobre la renovación acomodada de la formación para la vida religiosa*, Colección CLAR 7 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969).

19 Paul VI, *Exhortación apostólica de su santidad Papa Pablo VI sobre la renovación de la vida religiosa según las enseñanzas del Concilio*, Colección CLAR 12 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1973).

20 SCRIS and the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, *Criterios para las relaciones entre obispos y religiosos en la Iglesia*, Colección CLAR 41 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1978).

21 Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed., *Ordenes antiguas. Respuestas nuevas*, Colección CLAR 29 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1976). There are documents from the 1975 Jesuit XXXII General Congregation (1975), the General Chapter of the Franciscans (1973), and a Latin American Dominican gathering (1974). I am indebted to Sister Hermengarda Martins for telling me that the chapters of the international religious congregations served as an important transmitter of theological views to Latin American religious during this period.

22 Paul VI, "Pablo VI alerta a los religiosos sobre los peligros de la secularización," *Vida Religiosa*, 27 (1969) 461-465. Pope Paul also comments on the small communities in *ET* 40.

This worldwide crisis also affects Latin America,²³ resulting in fewer vocations and increasing numbers who leave religious life. With fewer new members, the challenges are further exacerbated, since there are fewer religious to meet the pastoral needs of an ever expanding Latin American population.²⁴

Latin American religious are also searching for solutions. Regional meetings of religious are held and, while various concerns surface, no solution is apparent.²⁵ In Latin America responses from the base also appear. There spring up through the continent Christian groups and associations which advocate radical change in the Church and religious life. Some of these groups and associations are composed only of religious, while others include the laity and diocesan clergy.²⁶

"Pequeñas comunidades sin superiora, satélites," *Vida Religiosa* 29 (1970) 141-150, (The small communities were a topic at a UISG [Union of Women's Superiors General] meeting) C Koser, "Las pequeñas comunidades," *Vida Religiosa*, 39 (1975) 246-251, (Father Koser was at this time Minister General of the Franciscans) P Boyle, "Small Community Experiences," *Review for Religious*, vol 30 (1971) 384-391, (Boyle mentions a study of the small communities in the United States) G Pastor, "Reflexiones sociológicas," p 166-174, (Pastor sees the small communities as a positive development, although not without problems)

23 CLAR, *Formación para la vida religiosa renovada en América Latina*, Colección CLAR 3-I (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1970) 35-37 Idem, *Formación para la vida religiosa renovada en América Latina*, CLAR 3-II (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1970) 9-11, 45-49 CLAR "Documento de la CLAR sobre la formación de los presbíteros," in *Presbíteros y religiosos para el futuro*, ed G Barauna, Colección Perspectivas 3 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1971) 153-164

24 CNBB, "XIV Assembleia Geral de CNBB," *SEDOC* (abril 1975) 959-1012, esp 990-992. This study reveals that in Brazil between 1966 and 1973 1,377 priests are laicized (713 of these are religious)

25 Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed, *La vida religiosa en América Latina Respuestas y compromisos*, Colección CLAR 8 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1969) This includes the Latin American regional meetings of the Dominicans, the Jesuits, the Franciscans, Christian Brothers, and the Salesians. The most famous of these is the 1968 meeting of Jesuit Provincial Superiors in Rio de Janeiro. At the conclusion of the meeting a letter is published in which the Jesuit provincials support the need for liberation, a re-evaluation of their ministries (especially their educational institutions), and social promotion work with the poor. Other meetings include "Los redemptoristas latinoamericanos y su capítulo general," *Boletín CLAR* 7 5 (mayo 1969) 1, 7, "Primera asamblea interprovincial latinoamericana de las religiosas del sagrado corazón," *Boletín CLAR* 8 10 (octubre 1969) 3, "Los oblatos en latinoamericana," *Boletín CLAR* 8 5 (mayo 1970) 2, "Importante reunión de la Unión Internacional de Superiores Generales," *Boletín CLAR* 8 11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970) 4

26 Sacerdotes para el Tercero Mundo, "Nossa reflexão," *SEDOC* (setembro 1970) 197-233, (Argentina) Sacerdotes para o povo, "Sacerdotes para o povo," *SEDOC* (abril 1973) 1260-1272, (Mexico) ONIS, "Declaração do ONIS sobre a reforma agrária no Peru," *SEDOC* (novembro 1969) 657-660, (Peru) "Proposições do clero chileno," *SEDOC* (setembro 1971) 297-302, (Chile) John Eagleson, ed, *Christians and Socialism* (Maryknoll Orbis, 1975) This book contains documents from the Cristianos para el Socialismo and the Chilean group, Ochenta (Eighty)

The small communities also develop in Latin America, most noticeably in Brazil. Some wonder if these can offer a solution to the challenges posed by the social needs of Latin America and the post-conciliar demands.

This search for answers leads to conflict within the Church.²⁷ Religious congregations become divided not only over theological issues but also basic stances in relation to the socio-cultural reality of Latin America. Conflict with the hierarchy occurs as many bishops express misgivings about the changes in religious congregations. This concern of the bishops is heightened by the ecclesial reality of Latin America where few dioceses would be able to meet the pastoral needs of the people without the religious.²⁸

The year 1972 is a turning point in the relations between religious and the hierarchy. At a CELAM meeting in Sucre (Bolivia), a majority of the bishops, under the leadership of Bishop López Trujillo, turn CELAM away from its early support for liberation theology towards fervent opposition to it. With this shift the relationship between CLAR and CELAM becomes increasingly strained.²⁹

CLAR and the theology of liberation

The theology of liberation exerts a great influence over CLAR. This influence is apparent even in the earliest stages of liberation theology's development³⁰ and can be seen in various ways. Some of CLAR's most prominent theologians are former members of radicalized priest groups which serve as an important channel for the distribution of liberation theology.³¹ Liberation theologians also are invited by various national religious conferences to speak before meetings³² and

27 C. Danielou, "A vida religiosa em julgamento," *SEDOC* (março 1973) 1069-1070. This conflict is not restricted to Latin America. In 1973 Cardinal Daniélou expresses his misgiving over the direction of the religious life. He says, "the crisis in the religious life is very serious and should not be spoken about as renewal but rather decadence".

28 "Religiosos en la América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 6 11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1968): 12; (There are 21,300 diocesan priests compared to 23,697 religious priests in Latin America)

29 CLAR, "Anexo III-Documento 4," in *V Asamblea General de la CLAR Medellín Enero 17-27 de 1973* (Bogotá. CLAR, 1973) 1-5 mimeo. This lists some of CELAM's complaints against CLAR. CLAR is seen as: failing to follow CELAM's orientations, publishing certain questionable studies, politizing religious life, adopting positions not representative of religious, and finally the role of CLAR in the pastoral training centers.

30 S. Gotay, *O pensamento cristão revolucionário na América Latina e no Caribe* (São Paulo. Edições Paulinas, 1985): 70-122. C. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, p. 176-188.

31 C. Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, p. 175. Ricardo Antoncich was a member of ONIS, a Peruvian priest group and Ronaldo Muñoz belonged to the more radical group, Ochenta. Both Antoncich and Muñoz serve on the CLAR team of theologians (Antoncich from 1974 until 1989).

32 "En las conferencias nacionales," *Boletín CLAR* 8 11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970) 9. One of the instructors at a CIRM (i.e. the Mexican Religious Conference) training session is Alex Morelli, an Italian missionary in Mexico who wrote an early book of liberation theology "Las religiosas argentinas," *Boletín CLAR* 7 5 (mayo 1969) 1, 3, 7. At a meeting of major superiors for Argentine sisters one of three speakers is Lucio Gera, an Argentine liberation theologian. S. Gotay, *O Pensamento cristão revolucionário*, p. 94-95, 98.

teach at the various pastoral training centers.³³ CLAR further asks the assistance of many prominent liberation theologians for its official studies on religious life and evangelization.³⁴ Finally, CLAR itself becomes an important means for the dissemination of liberation theology through its publications and seminars.³⁵ This relationship with liberation theology also is source of controversy. CLAR, after 1972, finds itself facing a CELAM leadership, which has sympathy neither for liberation theology nor CLAR's support of it. CLAR's response, through Secretary General Patiño, is that CLAR had never officially studied liberation theology.³⁶ Nonetheless the subject remains a sensitive one between CLAR and CELAM.³⁷

Social and political factors influencing religious life and CLAR's reflections

There is a continuation of urbanization, industrialization as well as the social changes which they produce. So also is there a continuation of political activism within Latin America, as groups try to change the current social and political institutions, sometimes through armed struggle.³⁸

Yet most dramatic is the rise of military regimes, which become the norm throughout Latin America. Beginning in 1968 the Brazilian military tightens its

33 L. Patiño, "Los seminarios de la CLAR," p. 1-3. Most important is IPLA [Instituto Pastoral Latinoamericano] in Quito, directed by Segundo Galilea, which has among its professors: E. Beltrán, J. Comblin, J. Marins, R. Vidales. CLAR and IPLA jointly sponsor two seminars in 1972 and 1973. *Boletín CLAR* 11 8 (agosto 1973): 4-5. Another example is a CLAR-CIDAL seminar "Pastoral y los marginados," given in Mexico, at which Ricardo Antoncich speaks about liberation theology.

34 "La vida espiritual del religioso," *Boletín CLAR* 10 3 (marzo 1972): 1, 2. L. Patiño, "Quinta Asamblea Informe del secretariado general Actividades CLAR [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," *Boletín CLAR* 11 1-2 (enero-febrero 1973): 13. Theologians involved in the preparation of *La vida según el Espíritu* include: L. Boff, A. Paoli, and N. Zavallos. Those who work on the controversial CLAR study, *Vida religiosa e compromisso sócio-político* include E. Dussel, P. Fontaine, J.B. Libânio, L. Gera, R. Muñoz, C. de Lora, G. Gutiérrez, and R. Poblete. "Preparación inmediata de la Cuarta Asamblea General," *Boletín CLAR* 7 11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1969): 2. Among the theologians who work on *Pobreza y vida religiosa en América Latina* are: G. Arroyo, R. Muñoz, N. Zavallos, and R. Poblete.

35 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral sobre América Latina*, ed. S. Galilea, Colección Perspectivas 4 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1974): 41-46. It mentions the following books: G. Gutiérrez (*Teología de la liberación*), R. Alves (*Religión: Opio o instrumento de liberación*), De la Iglesia y la sociedad), J.L. Segundo (*De la sociedad a la teología*), H. Assmann (*Opresión-liberación: Desafío a los cristianos*), and Bishop Pironio (*Teología de la liberación*, an article).

36 L. Patiño, "Qué es la CLAR?" *Boletín CLAR* 10 9 (septiembre 1972): 7. It is, of course, true that CLAR never makes a study of liberation theology. However, Secretary General Patiño does not mention that all major studies of CLAR are done with significant input from major liberation theologians.

37 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 41-42. Liberation theology is controversial and for some is associated with an earlier 'theology of revolution'. L. Patiño, "A los lectores," *Boletín CLAR* 12 8 (agosto 1974): 1. Patiño in the introduction to this edition of *Boletín CLAR* expresses hope that a speech by Pope Paul VI on salvation and liberation can relieve concerns around liberation theology.

38 Cf. p. 20-22.

control and imposes strict martial law, which it justifies as necessary for the prevention of a Communist revolt. Violent persecution follows, leading to the arrest and death of many student activists, union leaders and rural labor organizers. Priests and religious also become the targets of this repression. Many are tortured and murdered as a result of their defense of the poor.³⁹ The example of Brazil, unfortunately, is not an exception but a model which is followed throughout Latin America. In one nation after another the military seizes power in: Bolivia (1973), Uruguay (1973), Peru (1975), Ecuador (1976), Argentina (1976) and the highly publicized 1973 *coup d'état* in Chile, which deposes the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende. In each of these nations repression becomes commonplace, as military leaders declare that the need for a policy of national security.⁴⁰

CLAR's methodology

Following Medellín, most CLAR discussions on the religious life and its relationship to evangelization are based upon an inductive methodology. The starting point is a sociological and theological interpretation of the Latin American reality. This inductive methodology is used in the formulation of many CLAR studies, which are not solely the work of theologians but reflect the concerns and experiences of the grassroots.⁴¹

39 Centro de Documentação e Informação (CEDI), "Repressão na Igreja no Brasil," *SEDOC* (maio 1979): 1173-1174. This article lists the priests, religious and bishops who are among the victims of the repression from 1968 until 1979 in Brazil. 122 are arrested, 34 are tortured, 18 receive death threats; 7 are murdered, 10 expelled from the country; 12 others threatened with expulsion; and 2 native Brazilians are exiled.

40 E. Dussel, "From the Second Vatican Council to the Present Day," in *The Church in Latin America 1492-1992*, ed. E. Dussel, trans. P. Burns (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992): 153-182.

41 "Crónica de actividades de la IV Asamblea," *Boletín CLAR* 8 1-2 (enero-febrero 1970). 12. This describes the methodology which is used for *Pobreza y vida religiosa*. First, a work document is drafted and sent to the national conferences with a request that religious reflect on it and send comments to the CLAR Secretary General. After receiving these comments and criticisms, theologians redraft the document. This document then is presented to the General Assembly or General Board for acceptance or rejection. This procedure is also followed in: *La vida según el Espíritu de las comunidades religiosas en América Latina* (CLAR 14, 1973), *El religioso educador* (Colección CLAR 23, 1975), *La religiosa hoy en América Latina* (Colección CLAR 13, 1972), and *Experiencia latinoamericana de vida religiosa* (Colección CLAR 42, 1979).

Part II

Section I

From 1968 until 1974

Part II analyzes CLAR's reflections over religious life and its evangelization from Medellín (1968) until 1979. Within this period 1974 represents an important shift in CLAR's reflections and therefore Part II is divided into two sections. Section I covers the period from 1968 until 1974, during which CLAR and the Latin American religious' prime concern is to make a response to the challenges, posed by Medellín. A part of this response is the search for a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the social, political and cultural context in Latin America. This leads religious to viewing Latin America from three different sociological perspectives, rival interpretations of the Latin American reality. But efforts to more fully understand Latin America are not solely a response to Medellín. Rather, a more complete knowledge of Latin America is viewed as necessary if religious are to fulfill the Council's call for the adaptation of their life. Yet, as becomes increasingly clear, CLAR views the Latin American reality as making concrete demands on religious in the renewal of their life and evangelization.

2 Three perspectives on the Latin American reality

2.0 Introduction

Chapter 2 traces how CLAR and the Latin American religious respond to one of the challenges, mentioned from the 1968 General Board, namely the need for a fuller knowledge of the Latin American reality. Within CLAR discussions, three separate perspectives appear as ways for analyzing the Latin American social reality. These reflect three differing starting points for sociological analysis (secularization, dependency, and gender). Each perspective places clear demands upon religious life and offers a theological interpretation of the Latin American reality.

2.1 Secularization

Prior to Medellín, religious expressed concern over development and the social, economic and cultural changes which accompany it in Latin America. Concern about these changes persist though now development is seen more broadly, as part of a process of secularization. In the 1960s, secularization is a frequent topic for reflection by Western theologians and sociologists. Influenced by these reflections, some Latin American religious view Latin America from the perspective of this process of secularization.

Although the secularization perspective appears in CLAR's literature, it never exerts a major influence on CLAR or the national conferences of religious.⁴² Nonetheless, this perspective provides insights into how some religious view the context of Latin America.

Analysis

Concern over secularization surfaces very early with the approval of a CLAR document on formation by the Fourth General Assembly.⁴³ In this document there is a brief description of secularization as a worldwide process that produces social, religious, economic, and cultural change. The effects of secularization are,

42 "En las conferencias nacionales," *Boletín CLAR* 9:1 (enero 1971): 7. "Secularización y educación en la fe," *Boletín CLAR* 10:5 (mayo 1972): 7; (A group of religious in Chile reflect on the effect of secularization on education). L. Boff, *Vida religiosa y secularización*, 2nd. ed., Colección CLAR 18 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1974; Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service: 1976); (page references are to reprint edition). At the 1971 General Assembly of the CRB, Leonardo Boff speaks on the "Religious life and the secular world."

43 "Crónica de actividades de la IV Asamblea," p. 14.

however, seen as largely restricted to the large urban areas of Latin America, leaving the countryside untouched. Secularization brings not only changes, according to this formation document, but also many new problems to Latin America: rapid urbanization, poverty, and the marginalization of some groups.⁴⁴

Further discussion within CLAR over the process of secularization provides an even clearer picture of its main features. Secularization causes change, which within Latin America results in a macro-social shift. Social institutions, which previously were religious or had close connections to the Church, are gone or have lost their influence. This produces a shift in society that restricts the social witness and power which the Church previously enjoyed.⁴⁵

Secularization carries with it new understandings of an individual's relationship to self, God and nature. These understandings are often impossible to harmonize with existing views and conflict with inherited traditions and beliefs.⁴⁶

Secularization alters how a person views self. No longer does the individual see him/herself as bound by traditional institutions or ideas, but rather as a free and active agent who can choose personal beliefs. The individual furthermore has the ability to critically examine social institutions and change them if they no longer are beneficial.⁴⁷ The reference point in making these individual choices is no longer the past but personal experience in the present.⁴⁸

Secularization changes the person's relationship to God. The image of God is demythologized. God is no longer seen as present in miracles or the unexplained natural phenomena, but instead viewed as radically the Other who gives hope to humanity. Joined to this, is the realization that our image of God is inseparable from the socio-cultural context. The way that an individual understands self and others in a specific society affects how God is conceived.⁴⁹

Finally, secularization bears a new scientific consciousness that alters the human relationship to nature. Through the use of reason, nature is explainable and through modern technology nature can be molded to accommodate human needs.⁵⁰

44 CLAR, *Formación para la vida religiosa renovada*, p. 13-15.

45 J.M.R. Tillard, "Repensar el gobierno de los institutos," in *Vida religiosa en el mundo secularizado. Impacto*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 9 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1971): 82. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo latinoamericano*, Colección CLAR 6 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1968; Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969): 11-16; (page references are to the reprint edition).

46 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto y reflexión teológica sobre el fenómeno de la secularización," in *Vida religiosa en el mundo secularizado. Incidencias*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 10 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1971): 16.

47 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 18-20. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 11-14.

48 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 19-20. J.M.R. Tillard, "Repensar el gobierno," p. 74-75.

49 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 20-22.

50 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 16-17.

Theological interpretation

The process of secularization is interpreted not as *per se* a rejection of Christianity. Rather, secularization is viewed as a natural development, originating in biblical ideas and beliefs, which is liberating the human person, and giving a new purified vision of self, the world and God.⁵¹

Not only a natural development from biblical ideas and beliefs but God's presence can also be seen in the process of secularization. While appearing anti-Christian, secularization should not be rejected, for within the world God is always present. This presence of God is unlimited and includes secularization. This recognition requires that Christians accept the autonomy of the world (gs 36) in order to discern God's presence in the process of secularization.⁵²

Secularization is, furthermore, interpreted not as a blind process but one that will improve all human society.⁵³ The reason for this view is that the Holy Spirit is seen as guiding the process of secularization for the liberation of humanity: "the social transformations are not the fruit of blind mechanisms, but rather the Holy Spirit, who through human action leads history to its fullness." Justification for this view is found in *Gaudium et Spes* (gs 11; 34; 57).⁵⁴

Support for this theological interpretation of secularization is found among prominent West European and North American theologians⁵⁵ who view it as a positive development for Christianity.

Identity of religious

Old certainties are undermined because secularization challenges religious life's ability to witness the Kingdom and questions its continued validity.

1 Secularization challenges religious life to show that it can still present an eschatological witness to the modern world. Two possible answers are given to this challenge which view the witness of religious life somewhat differently. Nonetheless, both have much in common. Both affirm that religious life can still witness the Kingdom and needs to actively help build it in human history. Similarly, both see the eschatological witness of religious as communal. It is through

51 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 23-29. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 15.

52 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 36-38.

53 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 9, 16, 32, 37.

54 CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 15; ("... las transformaciones sociales no son fruto de mecanismos ciegos, sino que el Espíritu Santo, a través de la acción humana, conduce la historia a su plenitud").

55 References are made to: K. Rahner, J.B. Metz, T. de Chardin, O. Semmelroth, E. Schillebeeckx, "Het nieuwe mens- en godsbeeld in conflict met het religieuze leven," *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 7 (1967): 1-27; and Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (New York: Mac Millan, 1966).

the sharing of life and possessions by a community that religious provide others with a clear, albeit partial, witness of the Kingdom.⁵⁶

The first approach, is influenced by J.M.R. Tillard, who understands religious life as a common project with one goal, namely a clear manifestation of the Kingdom through a community's dedication to God.⁵⁷ Coupled with this understanding, religious life is viewed as a memorial, reminding everyone of a common need for community.⁵⁸

A second approach stresses that religious life is the communal following of Christ which requires not only the attitudes of Jesus⁵⁹ but also to "imitate the concrete example of His life."⁶⁰ Through the imitation of Jesus, a religious community searches for communion with all people, as Jesus did. It is through this search for communion that religious communities reveal an eschatological witness.⁶¹

2 Secularization challenges religious life to demonstrate its continued validity and that it is not inimical to personal growth and development. This challenge also touches on the public witness of religious but in a different way than in the preceding discussion. Here the belief is that religious can make an eschatological witness only if they are perceived as psychologically healthy and developing personally.

In order to make this witness of healthy and developing religious, changes are seen as necessary in religious congregations' internal community life and theology. Change is first of all necessary in the internal life structures of religious congregations to allow freedom for personal growth by religious. This can be accomplished through the incorporation of modern values into religious communities which place an importance upon: liberty, relationships, personal development, communal decision making, and dialogue.⁶²

In addition to change in the internal life of religious communities, a re-interpretation of the three evangelical counsels is necessary. In the light of secularization, the evangelical counsels need an interpretation which is not repressive but allows for

56 J.M.R. Tillard, "El proyecto de la vida religiosa," in *Vida religiosa en el mundo secularizado. Incidencias*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 10 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1971): 54. J.M. Guerrero, "El impacto de la secularización sobre la vida religiosa," in *Vida religiosa en el mundo secularizado. Impacto*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 9 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1971): 37. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 19-20.

57 J.M.R. Tillard, "El proyecto de la vida religiosa," p. 40-56, 47-52. J.M. Guerrero, "El impacto de la secularización," p. 62. J.M.R. Tillard, *Devant Dieu et pour le monde* (Paris: Cerf, 1974); (This book contains a summary of Tillard's views on religious life).

58 J.M. Guerrero, "El impacto de la secularización," p. 68-69. Idem, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 9. J.M.R. Tillard, "Vida religiosa y nueva sociedad," *Boletín CLAR* 11:7 (julio 1973): 8.

59 Cf. p. 26-27.

60 CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 19; ("imitar el ejemplo concreto de su vida histórica").

61 CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 20.

62 J.M. Guerrero, "El impacto de la secularización," p. 64-65. J.M.R. Tillard, "Repensar el gobierno," p. 73-75. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 37-40.

freedom by an individual religious.⁶³ Within CLAR discussions, much attention is given to the vow of obedience and how it should be understood. There is also substantial unease surrounding evangelical poverty and its precise demands upon religious. Does evangelical poverty require a sharing in the poor's material want and insecurity or is it a public witness of a community's sharing of goods?⁶⁴

Finally, the small communities are viewed as a new form of religious community which can respond to both of secularization's challenges to religious life. The small communities make a eschatological witness, which is active and different from past religious life. They are seen as flexible in their internal structure, allowing the personal growth of religious and a place where, through lived experience, new insights on the evangelical counsels can surface which can more solidly ground religious life in the face of secularization.⁶⁵

2.2 Dependency

Another approach to the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality is in diametrical opposition to the secularization perspective. This approach uses the insights from socio-economic theories of dependency to demonstrate that the causes of social injustice lie in social macro-structures. While the secularization analysis sees Latin American socio-cultural reality in terms of a clash with past values and traditions, dependency identifies the conflict as flowing from present unjust structural relationships.

There is no single theory of dependency but rather a cluster of various interpretations by sociologists and economists, who seek an explanation for the reality of underdevelopment. Some analyses view this reality through the use of capitalistic or Keynesian economic categories and stress that underdevelopment can be overcome within existing economic systems. Others, however, use Marxist theories, and understand underdevelopment as a consequence of capitalism's evolution. For these forms of dependency analysis, reform of existing structures is impossible and the only solution is a radical change of the economic system. In spite of this variety, there are three common elements which link all the dependency theories.

63 J.M. Guerrero, "El impacto de la secularización," p. 13-50.

64 J.M. Guerrero, "El impacto de la secularización," p. 33-39. It is interesting to note that *Pobreza de la Iglesia 4* is cited to show that evangelical poverty is a form of solidarity with the poor. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 41-45; (PC 17 and PP are cited). At the same time a religious, working for a salary, is seen as an expression of evangelical poverty. Through pooling members' salaries, a religious community is described as giving a public testimony of poverty.

65 J.M. Guerrero, "El impacto de la secularización," p. 51-59. J.M.R. Tillard, "Repensar el gobierno," p. 51-59, 83-88. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 29; (PC 3 is cited).

- Underdevelopment is viewed as a process which affects all aspects of society. As a result, the economic effects of underdevelopment are seen as inseparable from its cultural and social consequences.
- Underdevelopment cannot be explained by abstract theories which assume that development can follow the example of the United States or West Europe. Instead, the theories of dependency declare that the Latin American reality must be the starting point for any study of underdevelopment.
- Finally, dependency theories reject the sociological school of functionalism. All theories of dependency conceive of the relationship between the developed and underdeveloped nations as dialectical in which the interests of the former are always given priority over the later.⁶⁶

CLAR discussions exhibit a lack of precision in their understanding of dependency. The reason for this lies in CLAR's intentions. CLAR is not interested in giving Latin American religious a scientific study over underdevelopment. Rather, CLAR's goal is more practical, namely the use of certain elements from dependency theories for the interpretation of the Latin American reality. This partial use of the dependency theory is not unique to CLAR and can also be seen in the theologies of liberation which often display a similar lack of clarity in discussions around dependency.⁶⁷ While CLAR's lack of precision is understandable, it makes it difficult to determine which variant of dependency theory CLAR adopts as a basis for its analysis of Latin America.

Another problem which obscures the discussion around dependency is the possible influence of Marxist thought on CLAR's analysis. As mentioned earlier, Marxism influences one version of the dependency theory. At this time in Latin America, socially and ecclesially, Marxism is a controversial topic. Nonetheless, one CLAR study, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, reflects certain Marxist ideas, although without explicit reference to Marx or any other Marxist thinker. This Marxist influence is, nonetheless, apparent in the use and importance given to certain terms (e.g. historical project) which are associated with the Italian Communist, Antonio Gramsci.⁶⁸

There are two separate CLAR studies which analyze Latin America from the perspective of dependency. A first analysis appears in *Pobreza y vida religiosa en*

66 G. Arroyo, "Afhankelijkheidstheorie, een geldige bemiddeling voor de bevrijdingstheologie," in *Bevrijding en christelijk geloof in Latijns-Amerika en Nederland*, ed. J. Van Nieuwenhove (Baarn, Netherlands: Ambo, 1977): 55-63.

67 A. McGovern, "Dependency Theory, Marxist Analysis and Liberation Theology," in *Expanding the View*, eds. M. Ellis and O. Maduro (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990): 77-95.

68 Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Communist who died in prison. A summary of Gramsci's views can be found in: J. Fulton, "Religion and Politics in Gramsci: An Introduction," *Sociological Analysis*, vol. 48:3 (1987): 197-216.

América Latina,⁶⁹ which is approved by the 1969 Fourth CLAR General Assembly,⁷⁰ making it an official document of CLAR.

The second analysis is made by *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*. In 1971, the CLAR General Board (Managua, Nicaragua) asks for a study of the relationship between religious life and the Latin American political reality. CLAR invites a select group of theologians to reflect on this theme in May of 1972.⁷¹ The result is a work document, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, which is sent to all the national conferences for discussion. This work document, unlike *Pobreza y vida religiosa en América Latina*, is not an official document from CLAR but gives an interesting contrast to it.

There is no doubt that dependency perspective is very popular with the CLAR leadership. At the famous 1972 El Escorial gathering of liberation theologians,⁷² CLAR President Edwards along with other members of the General Board voice support for dependency as a beneficial perspective for analyzing Latin American reality.⁷³

Analysis

A first analysis using dependency appears in *Pobreza y vida religiosa* which describes Latin America as dominated by international economic structures that create dependent relationships between the developed and underdeveloped nations. These relationships of inequality are further maintained by the international structures, which prevent development and benefit the developed nations. The international structures of dependency also affect the internal life of Latin American nations. Dependency is seen as touching and deforming the cultural, social and political life, making each Latin American society a mirror of the international reality. A situation of underdevelopment within each nation is created which benefits the few rich at the expense of the poor majority.⁷⁴

69 "Preparación inmediata de la Cuarta Asamblea General," *Boletín CLAR* 7:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1969): 2. CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa en América Latina*, Colección CLAR 4 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1970). Among the theologians who work on *Pobreza y vida religiosa* are: G. Arroyo, R. Muñoz, N. Zevallos, and R. Poblete.

70 "Cronica de actividades de la IV Asamblea," p. 15-16, 19.

71 "Los religiosos y la situación socio-política de América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 10:5 (mayo 1972): 1. L. Patiño, "Quinta Asamblea: Informe [V Asamblea General, Medellín]," p. 13. Some of the theologians present at this Montevideo gathering include: E. Dussel, P. Fontaine, L. Patiño, and N. Zevallos.

72 "Fe y cambio social en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 10:8 (agosto 1972): 2. CLAR President M. Edwards, Vice President Zevallos and María Agudelo, head of the women religious section of CLAR, participate at El Escorial.

73 A.A. Bolado et al., *Fe cristiana y cambio social en América Latina: Encuentro de El Escorial*, (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1973): 373-381. "Problemas en la evangelización de América Latina," *CONFER* (1972): 455-465. In the same year there is a joint meeting between the leadership from CLAR and their Spanish colleagues (CONFER). The Spanish religious have difficulty with the CLAR leadership's use of dependency, the concept of 'liberation' and seeing theology with a socially critical role.

74 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 13-20.

Nonetheless, *Pobreza y vida religiosa* does not see the situation as hopeless but believes that dependent structures can be modified to fashion more just relationships both internationally and within each nation.⁷⁵ But the realization that change is possible produces conflict in Latin America. As the poor become increasing aware of poverty's structural cause, they join popular movements which work for social change. These popular movements encounter violent repression by the upper classes for whom any change in the *status quo* would be disadvantageous.⁷⁶ But this repression begets counter violence from the poor, beginning a cycle of violence which transforms Latin America's reality ever more into one of "institutionalized violence" (Medellín, *Paz* 10).⁷⁷

A second analysis views dependency as more far reaching, penetrating all aspects of life, cultural, social and political life as well as producing human relationships of inequality.⁷⁸ For this analysis, religion is also affected, as dependency encourages forms of religiosity which obscure a clear view of the socio-political and cultural reality as well as impede action for social change.⁷⁹

This analysis offers a subtle criticism of secularization's faith in progress by stating that modern technology offers Latin America no escape from its underdevelopment. In fact, the opposite is the case. The costs of modern technology are so exorbitant that in trying to obtain them, underdeveloped nations would be led to even greater dependency in order to pay for their acquisition.⁸⁰

Perhaps most characteristic of this second dependency analysis is its identification that the cause of social conflict lay not in a new awareness of oppression by the Latin American people but rather a clash between rival historical projects (*proyectos históricos*).⁸¹ The poor have their own historical project for liberation, bringing them into conflict with a rival historical project that seeks to maintain the unjust *status quo*. In this situation, reform of existing structures is seen as impossible, instead new socio-cultural structures are necessary.

According to this analysis, the poor are viewed as the possessors of a culture with values and beliefs upon which new social structures for Latin America can be constructed.⁸²

75 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 48.

76 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 21-23.

77 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 13-21, 46-47, 56.

78 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política en América Latina. Grandes problemas socio-políticos de América Latina* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1972): 7.

79 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 8.

80 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 5-6.

81 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 8-9. A 'historical project' consists of: a) a common consciousness by a people b) who share common human values c) which they seek to use in the refashioning of social, economic, and cultural spheres.

82 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 8-11, 21.

Theological interpretation

The dependency perspective also offers a theological interpretation of reality. This interpretation rests upon a view of creation and eschatology in the study *Pobreza y vida religiosa*.

The present Latin American social reality is judged as a denial of God's plan at Creation. God created the world for the enjoyment and use by all people, yet in Latin America the poor are deprived of basic material goods, necessary for life. The Latin American reality is viewed as violating God's plan at Creation in another way. Because of the gaps between rich and poor, community between these social groups is blocked, making material goods a barrier which divides, rather than unites people. This interpretation is based not only upon a reading of Genesis but also *Gaudium et Spes* (GS 24-25; 29; 69).⁸³

Joined to this is an understanding of eschatology, which sees the Kingdom as initiated by Jesus and continuing in human history. Thus the Kingdom is not understood in a dualistic manner, isolated from the events of human history but rather as present in history and advancing the liberation of all (GS 3; *Justicia* 4).⁸⁴ A consequence of the Kingdom's presence in history is soteriological, namely that salvation can no longer be divorced from material reality. Instead, human salvation has to offer freedom from all enslaving conditions so that, "the Gospel, if well understood, presents us paradoxically with a *human salvation that is not only religious but integral*."⁸⁵

The historical presence of the Kingdom places clear demands upon Christians.⁸⁶ First of all, they must be willing to share their possessions with the poor in order to build community. This sharing goes beyond the gift of one's surplus to the poor and involves a radical disappropriation because the 'evangelical counsel of poverty' is seen as applying to all Christians:

"The Tradition speaks here of the 'evangelical counsel of poverty'. What is often understood is something 'facultative'. In reality, this 'counsel' would have to be translated as a '*requirement*' for everyone who wants to take the Gospel of Christ seriously and convert to it (Matt. 1:15). All who want 'to be perfect' and each Christian has the obligation to be that (Matt. 5:48; LG 40)."⁸⁷

83 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 34-39. *Pobreza y vida religiosa* sees itself as following Medellín's view of the Latin American social reality.

84 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 48-49.

85 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 48; ("el Evangelio bien entendido nos presenta pardoalmente una salvación del hombre que no es solo religiosa sino integral, y un Dios que es gratuito").

86 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 37-40, 48.

87 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 39; ("La Tradición habla aquí del 'consejo evangélico' de pobreza. Lo que se ha entendido a menudo como algo 'facultativo'. En realidad, este 'consejo' habría que traducirlo como una '*exigencia*' para todo hombre que quiera tomar en serio el Evangelio de Cristo y 'convertirse' a él [Mark 1:15]. Todo aquel que quiera 'ser perfecto' siguiendo a Jesús, y todo cristiano tiene la obligación de serlo [Matt. 5:48; LG 40]"). Oddly *Pobreza* 6 is not cited.

Pobreza y vida religiosa states that while not everyone can observe the radicalness of evangelical poverty, clear demands are placed upon each Christian's use of material goods.

The Kingdom's presence in history also requires support for the poor's liberation and action for the change of social structures as a concrete expression of Christian love (*Justicia 2; Paz 16*).⁸⁸ Support for the poor's liberation is seen as a constant which runs throughout the Bible. Not only did God rescue the "poor of Egypt" (Exod. 3; 7; 10) but S/He was the special protector of the poor throughout the Old Testament. Most importantly, for Christians, is the example of Jesus whose Incarnation, and preaching reveal God's preference for the poor.⁸⁹

Vida religiosa y situación socio-política also states that the entire Church should devote itself to the liberation of the poor. Support for liberation would allow the Church, which is to be a witness of communion, to build communion in Latin America by assisting the poor who are deprived of community. Added to this is a claim that support for the poor's liberation would be a sign of the Church's fidelity to Jesus who came to serve the needs of all. In Latin America, this service by the Church should be directed to the poor.⁹⁰

Eschatology is also important to *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política* which identifies the Kingdom's presence as not only among the poor but in their historical project. This presence of the Kingdom among the poor's historical project is an additional reason why it should be supported. Yet this support has a political dimension. For *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, political activity is a necessary means for the construction of the Kingdom in history.⁹¹

Identity of religious

The dependency of Latin America challenges religious' authenticity in the face of massive poverty and social oppression. Throughout Latin America, religious work in schools and hospitals which serve only the upper classes. As a result, most people see religious as rich and allied with the oppressors of the poor. In light of abject poverty by millions of people, religious who claim to live evangelical poverty are seen as unauthentic or hypocritical.⁹²

The authenticity of religious life is challenged in another way by the dependency perspective. Religious congregations evaluate their life and discover that in many ways they are alien from the Latin American people. Most congregations in Latin America have internal community structures, rules and mentalities which are

88 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 38, 50.

89 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 41-45.

90 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 11-12.

91 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 9-10, 17-19.

92 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 23-27, 55. Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 22-25.

European, reflecting neither the life nor the culture of the Latin American people.⁹³

Because of these two challenges doubt arises that religious give the Latin American people a clear witness of the Kingdom. The reason for this is clear: how can religious be an eschatological witness if seen as rich and alien by the people?

Both of these challenges to authenticity push religious to seriously look at their internal life and community structures. Change is judged necessary in order to support the poor's liberation and create a more Latin American form of religious life. Important for the realization of this change is a practice of evangelical poverty which requires a communal sharing of goods and material poverty as a sign of solidarity with the poor.⁹⁴

Not only collective poverty but life among the poor is seen as beneficial. *Pobreza y vida religiosa* does not believe that all religious could live among the poor (*Pobreza* 6). Nonetheless, it is viewed as beneficial for religious because:

"there is no more effective means to feel the responsibility and incoherence of our bourgeois life than to move into a poor neighborhood and share the life of those who live there."⁹⁵

Through a life among the poor, religious can purify their life and bring themselves closer to the Latin American people.

Vida religiosa y situación socio-política also offers a few reflections on religious identity. The charism of religious life is discussed briefly and interpreted as demanding a prophetic stance by religious against the social structures of dependency. Furthermore, religious life is seen as needing a conversion from its past alliance with the social elites. In order to achieve this conversion, religious should strive to see Latin America from the perspective of the poor and work for their liberation.⁹⁶

Finally, for *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política* social conflict is expected to have repercussions within religious congregations. While some religious support the liberation of the poor in obedience to the Kingdom, others refuse, "Religious communities today suffer the tensions between members with distinct ideological options."⁹⁷

93 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 27. Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 8, 13-14.

94 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 54.

95 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 66; ("...no haya otro medio más eficaz para sentir la responsabilidad y la incoherencia de nuestra vida burguesa, que instalarse en barrios pobres y compartir la vida de los que allí viven").

96 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 13-14, 19-22.

97 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 16, 26; (Quotation from p. 26).

2.3 Gender (the world of women)

The 1969 CLAR Fourth General Assembly requests a study of the women religious in Latin America which is designed to be entirely the product of the women religious.⁹⁸ As President M. Edwards says:

"In Latin America it has occurred to us as in other parts of the world: almost always the men have spoken about the women religious. At this time it is impossible to reflect deeply over this theme without the words of the women religious."⁹⁹

After a long and extensive period of reflection, which solicits the views of all women religious, the study is completed and later approved at the 1972 CLAR General Assembly (Cochabamba, Bolivia). It is thus a CLAR official document and published in the *Colección CLAR* series as *La religiosa hoy, en América Latina*. It is the key source for this gender perspective on Latin America.¹⁰⁰

Analysis

This perspective shares several important common elements with the previous dependency analysis. Like the dependency perspective, the gender viewpoint also views Latin America as enmeshed in international structures of dependency which produce conflict. There are, however, also important differences which make the gender perspective unique.

This perspective focusses on the condition of women and begins by reviewing their reality in Latin America. Like the majority of the people in Latin America, most women live in poverty and misery, but within this general context the condition of women is unique. Their oppression is more than just economic because in Latin America all women, regardless of social class, are oppressed. The roots of this oppression are identified as cultural. Women are viewed by the culture as helpless, submissive and in some cases mere sex objects. This image of woman distorts relations between men and women, clouding the basic human dignity which they both share. The Latin American cultural image of women also affects the identity of women. Through education and socialization, women have accepted an image

98 "Acuerdos y mociones de la IV Asamblea," *Boletín CLAR* 7:1-2 (enero-febrero 1970): 9. L. Patiño, "Quinta Asamblea: Informe [V Asamblea General, Medellín]," p. 14-15.

99 "Vida religiosa femenina en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 7:8 (agosto 1970): 2; ("nos ha ocurrido en América Latina como en otras partes del mundo sobre la vida religiosa femenina casi siempre han hablado los varones. En estos momentos no es posible pensar en una profundación de este tema sin que tengan la palabra las religiosas").

100 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy, en América Latina*, Colección CLAR 13 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1972). "La religiosa hoy, en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 10:3 (marzo 1972): 8. *La religiosa hoy* is approved by the 1972 CLAR General Board Meeting at Cochabamba, Bolivia.

of themselves as inferior to men. The result is that women are, in fact, alienated from their identity and need to discover their feminine nature.¹⁰¹

The oppression of women is manifested in all social structures which are seen as serving the interests of men at the expense of women. This includes the Church and development projects.¹⁰² This situation is highlighted by one religious sister, who equates the condition of Latin American women with slavery.¹⁰³ Underlying this oppression of Latin American women is a basic imbalance. Existing social institutions have incorporated only masculine values and deny the feminine. This situation creates an imbalance in Latin American society since these feminine values are seen as necessary as the masculine.¹⁰⁴

In spite of this oppressive situation, there is an expectation that change will soon occur. Women are increasingly aware of their oppression and a worldwide movement for their liberation. However efforts by women to achieve liberation clash with cultural stereotypes as well as social structures and in Latin America the women's quest for liberation is seen as joined to the broader movement which seeks the liberation of the poor.¹⁰⁵

Theological interpretation

The gender perspective on Latin America also provides a theological interpretation of the socio-cultural reality. From this perspective, the liberation movement by women is also described as one of the *signs of the times*, which the Church should not ignore.¹⁰⁶

A prime concern of the gender perspective is the re-interpretation of certain passages from Scripture, which have often been used to theologically legitimate the oppression of women. A 1973 CRB work document states:

"Religious concepts have, among these ideologies, a very important role. In the name of catholicism or the Christian faith, an image and social role for women is often maintained that in reality is the fruit of a patriarchal society which contradicts Christ's teaching on the human person."¹⁰⁷

101 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 13-18, 29-30.

102 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 37.

103 I. Pereira, "Qué espera América Latina de sus religiosas hoy?" *Boletín CLAR* 8:6 (junio 1970): 2, 8.

104 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 29-32.

105 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 13-14, 17-18, 57-58.

106 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 18; (PT 41 is cited in which the growing public involvement of women is judged as one of the "characteristics of the present day"). Also: *Boletín CLAR*, 7:9 (septiembre 1969): 1-2.

107 CRB, "Las mujeres en la Iglesia," *Boletín CLAR* 11:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1973): 9; ("Las concepciones religiosas tienen, entre estas ideologías, un papel muy importante. En nombre del catolicismo o de la fe cristiana, se conserva, muchas veces, una imagen de la mujer y su papel social, que en realidad es fruto de una sociedad patriarcal que contradice aun hasta la doctrina de Cristo sobre la persona humana").

La religiosa hoy gives an example of such a re-interpretation. The creation story in Genesis is re-interpreted to support the equality between the sexes, and their complementary natures, rather than the subordination of women. Men and women are equal in dignity and necessary for each other.¹⁰⁸

The gender perspective further attempts a re-evaluation of the image of the Virgin Mary. Her importance, as a model for women, is affirmed but in a way which differs from the traditional understanding. Mary is described not in pietistic, other-worldly terms but as a person who was open to others, dedicated to God and the Kingdom who hoped for the liberation of her people.¹⁰⁹

Identity of religious

As secularization challenges the continued validity of religious life and dependency questions its authenticity, so the gender perspective pushes women religious to search for an identity. Women religious, like other women, have internalized negative cultural images and expectations, which justify oppression. In order to counter these, women religious must search for an identity, which goes beyond cultural and ecclesial acceptability. In addition to this, women religious must search for their identity as well as a role within the Church.¹¹⁰ They seek "to respond in a feminine way to the human vocation of entering into communion with God."¹¹¹

The response to this challenge demands that women religious stress the importance of their witness to the world. Here, even more than the other perspectives, the accent is placed upon the communal witness of religious. In the face of social oppression, a religious community can publically demonstrate the values of equality, communion and justice. Furthermore, women religious communities can offer a concrete model of a new woman, freed from traditional stereotypes and cultural limits. In this way, religious women allow others to see a liberated woman.¹¹²

The making of this witness, as in the other perspectives, requires that the internal community life and structures of religious be changed. To model fraternity, religious communities have to change their internal community structures, marked by rigidity and authoritarianism. Communities should encourage everyone's participation in decision-making and at the same time display flexibility in meeting the needs of the sisters. Finally, women religious recognize that they have a new responsibility. In the face of social and ecclesial needs, women religious cannot stand aloof but must enter the poor's liberation struggle and serve the specific needs of other women.¹¹³

108 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 25-28.

109 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 28-29, 34.

110 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 11, 22.

111 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 27.

112 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 22, 46-50.

113 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 27, 37-39.

3 From pastoral to evangelization

3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, three different visions of the Latin American reality were discussed, each identifying different challenges for religious life's external witness and internal community life.

Prior to Medellín, two approaches to evangelization were identified. One had as a starting point the existing pastoral structures, while the second sought to respond to the development needs of Latin America.¹¹⁴ The bishops at Medellín addressed both in asking religious to cooperate with diocesan pastoral plans and support programs for human promotion (*promoción humana*).

After Medellín, ecclesial concerns remain but religious now center their attention more broadly, namely on how to fashion evangelization which gives a relevant response to the socio-cultural reality of Latin America. Chapter 3 looks at the challenges facing evangelization in Latin America and the pastoral visions which religious adopt in response.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first looks at how evangelization is seen from the perspective of secularization. From this perspective there is no comprehensive vision of either the challenges or a clear pastoral vision but rather a few general concerns about how religious in their evangelization should support the development of Latin America. Contrasted to this are the gender and dependency perspectives. Although some variety exists among these two perspectives, they can be analyzed together because both stress the need for an evangelization which is liberating.

A geographical, social and pastoral distance from the people

Medellín called for a better distribution of religious in order to further the pastoral work of the Church. In response, the 1968 Eighth General Board Meeting (Santo Domingo) commissions SIDEAT¹¹⁵ to do a sociological study of Latin American religious. The study's intent is to scientifically ascertain if the distribution of religious is, in fact, a serious problem in Latin America. With the co-operation of the national conferences, an extensive survey is made of many religious congrega-

114 Cf. p. 29-30.

115 SIDEAT is the Servicio de Información, Documentación, Estadísticas y Asesoría Técnica. It was associated with CELAM.

tions The results of this study are published in *Estudio sociográfico de los religiosos y las religiosas*¹¹⁶ and provides a dramatic confirmation of Medellín's concern

Estudio sociográfico reveals that religious are remote from the life of the normal Latin American in a several ways First of all, religious are geographically far from the majority of the people While 58% of the Latin American people live in the countryside (in 1971-jk), almost 70% of the men (and 80% of the women) religious live in large urban areas Furthermore within the cities, most religious communities are located in upper and middle class neighborhoods.¹¹⁷ Religious also distance themselves from the majority of the Latin American people through their pastoral activity Most religious work in educational and health care institutions with only a minority directly involved with parishes¹¹⁸ Finally, *Estudio sociográfico* shows that the focus of pastoral attention by most religious is the middle and upper classes rather than the poor¹¹⁹

Training programs for religious to answer new needs

Pastoral training programs, which began before 1968, are now more numerous,¹²⁰ allowing religious to learn about the results of Medellín and how their pastoral works, especially in education and health care, must change in response¹²¹ Special attention continues to be given to women religious and their need for pastoral training¹²² since after Medellín the Latin American Church encourages their entrance into pastoral work But several problems persist A first problem is a lack of experience by women religious Before Medellín, most women religious lived in strict cloisters and, if involved in a ministry, were restricted to health care and education As a consequence, very few sisters had

116 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Estudio sociográfico de los religiosos y las religiosas en América Latina*, Colección Perspectivas 2 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1971), (The study is begun in April of 1969) *Estudio sociografico* has a wide distribution and is reprinted in 5 parts by *Convergência* in 1972

117 CLAR, *Estudio sociográfico*, p 68-71, esp p 69 The study says that 51% of men (and 65% of women) religious' houses are located in middle or upper class areas

118 CLAR, *Estudio sociográfico*, p 78 For male religious 29.81% work in education, 6.75% in hospitals and only 36.07% in parishes For women religious, the statistics are more somber 36.14% in education, 16.21% in hospitals, and 18.12% in parish work

119 CLAR, *Estudio sociografico*, p 69, Anexo 11 and 12

120 "Instituto Superior de Pastoral Misionera," *Boletín CLAR* 7.4 (abril 1969) 7, (Haiti) "Semana de pastoral sobre los documentos de Medellín," p 7, (Uruguay) "Centro de Estudios Pastorales 'CEP'," *Boletín CLAR* 8.4 (abril 1970) 8, (Nicaragua) "Los cursos en los institutos del CELAM," *Boletín CLAR* 8.11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970) 11, (The IPLA, Instituto Pastoral Latinoamericano)

121 "Los cursos de planeamiento educativo," *Boletín CLAR* 10.4 (abril 1972) 1-2 CRB, "Mentalización y promoción de religiosos educadores en el Brasil," *Boletín CLAR* 8.11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970) 3

122 "La pastoral necesita gente preparada," *Boletín CLAR* 8.5 (mayo 1970) 3

pastoral experience. Added to this is the low educational levels of most women religious and the fact that few had any theological training.¹²³

The pastoral training programs aim to overcome both problems. Many programs offer a broad formation for the women religious with courses in theology, the social sciences (especially sociology) and the theology of liberation. Complementing the academic study, there is often an opportunity for actual pastoral experience so that women religious can work in parishes where the Church's presence is minimal, principally among the urban and rural poor.¹²⁴

These pastoral training programs are important for another reason. They provide religious with a nascent experience which unites theory and practice. This affects not only pastoral activity but also internal religious life. As a result of their theological training, some women religious form small communities to work in poor parishes. In these communities, there is communal reflection on the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality as well as on religious life, flowing from daily experience. Thus an inductive methodology is slowly born which is rooted in experience among the poor.¹²⁵

3.1 Secularization and evangelization

Concern over the evangelization is minimal from this perspective, since its main focus is the refashioning of community life through the acceptance of modern values. Nonetheless, a few general ideas are evident about how evangelization should respond to the challenges of secularization.

Secularization challenges Latin America to engage in socio-economic development. For religious who use the secularization perspective, Latin American development is seen as unable to follow the example of other nations. Instead,

123 CLAR, *Estudio sociográfico*, p. 63. While 89.1% of the men religious have only a primary level of education [i.e. education until age 14], for women religious the figure is 29.29%. Similarly, 36.70% of the men have some theological education compared to 4.24% of the women. M. Cauby and C. de Medina, *Religiosa e profissão. Pesquisa 11 Religiosa do plano de pastoral da CNBB* (1966-1970), (Rio de Janeiro: CERIS, 1969). This is a CERIS study which reveals a similar situation among women religious in Rio de Janeiro.

124 "Religiosas colombianas trabajan en la promoción del campesino," *Boletín CLAR* 7.2 (febrero 1969) 2, (Colombia). "México, cursos internacional de capacitación para agentes de cambio," *Boletín CLAR* 8 11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970) 9, (Mexico). "Experiencias en la formación," *Boletín CLAR* 8 4 (abril 1970) 8, (the Regina Mundi Institute in Mexico). "La comisión de acción social de los religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 10 4 (abril 1972) 3, (Colombia). "El Instituto 'Mater Ecclesiae' en el Uruguay," *Boletín CLAR* 10 4 (abril 1972) 7, (Uruguay). "Las religiosas y los marginados," *Boletín CLAR* 11 3 (marzo 1973) 1, 8, (This is a course sponsored by CLAR and CIDAL [Coordinación de Iniciativas para el Desarrollo de América Latina]).

125 "Vicariías de religiosas en Venezuela," *Boletín CLAR* 7 9 (septiembre 1969) 3. The Instituto Nacional de Pastoral in Venezuela trains women religious who later form small communities in the Caracas area.

development has to flow from the unique context of Latin America.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, obstacles are apparent which block Latin America's development and one of these is popular religion¹²⁷ which is judged as dualistic, separating faith from the daily life of the people. Added to this, popular religion is viewed as alienating the people from a realization of their power and ability to improve their lives.¹²⁸

In order to respond to these challenges, religious are called to support development. They should adopt as a general principle that people should be freed from all that prevents personal or communal development. This demands that evangelization should help "to free the person from every type of impediment that prevents his/her development."¹²⁹

The work of human promotion is seen as one way in which religious can make a contribution to Latin American development. A special focus for this human promotion work is support and assistance to the poor for the improvement of their condition.¹³⁰ This support leads to a variety of activities many of which are new for religious, individually and as communities. As a result, religious discover that they need additional training and education in order to contribute to the development of the people.

The support for development and human promotion is also seen as allowing religious to make a clearer eschatological witness and help overcome their negative public image. Through assisting the people in various projects of human promotion, religious make a presence among the poor, necessary for their eschatological witness, and at the same time demonstrate that they are not allies of the upper classes.¹³¹

Support for development can also benefit the internal life of religious communities. It is thought that the life of a religious community is enriched when members engage in a variety of different pastoral and human promotion activities. Through this diversity, the community's contacts are expanded and there is a mutual sharing by religious of different experiences.¹³²

However, a clear separation between the religious community and any pastoral institutions is again seen as necessary if religious are to make a clear witness of evangelical poverty.¹³³

126 CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 32; (AG 11).

127 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 30-33. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 26-27; (GS 39; 45 are cited).

128 CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 26, 30-31; (reference to LG 36).

129 CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 34.

130 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 30-33.

131 CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 33.

132 J.M.R. Tillard, "Repensar el gobierno," p. 84.

133 J.M. Guerrero, "Clarificación del concepto," p. 37, 55. CRB, *Vida religiosa y desarrollo*, p. 43.

3.2 Liberating evangelization

This perspective stresses that support for liberation and the change of social structures are necessary components of evangelization in Latin America. Yet several challenges face any such liberating evangelization.

Challenges in support of liberation

From this perspective, the primary challenge facing Latin America is the need for liberation from a situation of oppression. This need for liberation challenges evangelization to stress that the proclamation of the Kingdom and freedom are neither divorced from the context of Latin America nor the need for action. Instead, it should lead to efforts to change all unjust socio-political structures in Latin America.

This requires that religious support in various ways the liberation struggle of the poor as a part of evangelization.¹³⁴ One way to provide this support is through conscientization of the poor, giving them an awareness of the unjust social reality and motivating them to work for social change.¹³⁵ Support for liberation further leads to support for the poor's culture, which have positive values although these need discernment from alienating forms of popular religion.¹³⁶

Another challenge which a liberating evangelization faces is the lack of community in Latin America, especially among the poor. This lack of community is the direct result of the situation of dependency which prevents relationships based upon equality.¹³⁷

Finally, in Latin America many people, mostly the poor, are beyond the reach of the Church's traditional pastoral care. One reason for this is the shortage of priests and religious in Latin America. This situation is further aggravated by the over-concentration of priests and religious in the large urban areas. As a consequence, few people have personal contact with religious or an opportunity for catechesis.¹³⁸

134 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 21-26. CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 46-51. CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 14-15, 38-40.

135 C. Rojas, "Las religiosas promotoras del desarrollo," *Boletín CLAR* 7:4 (abril 1969): 3-6. CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 40-43. C. de Lora, "Algunos puntos de referencia para encuadrar la situación pastoral de América Latina," *CONFER* (1972): 384. Father de Lora defines *concientización* as, "something more than a simple 'awareness' and includes additionally a commitment to action, to change." This is similar to Medellín's use, especially in *Justicia* 16.

136 Primer seminario de formación para la vida religiosa, "Elementos más significativos de un religioso nuevo para Latinoamérica," *Boletín CLAR* 11:9 (septiembre 1973): 7. C. Rojas, "Las religiosas promotoras del desarrollo," p. 3-6. CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 14.

137 Primer seminario de formación para la vida religiosa, "Elementos más significativos," p. 4-7; (This is a CLAR seminar for formators). "Importante reunión de la Unión Internacional de Superiores Generales," p. 4.

138 "Vicaría de religiosas en Venezuela," p. 4.

3.3 Pastoral vision for a liberating evangelization

Critique of existing pastoral structures

Existing pastoral structures are judged inadequate for the needs of the Latin American people. The large educational and health care institutions of religious congregations are viewed as either politically naive or allied with the social elite. These institutions are seen as politically naive when they claim that their work can be politically neutral. In Latin American reality, marked by social conflict, such a claim denies the fact that no social institution can be neutral but either supports the *status quo* or works for change. This recognition demands an evaluation by religious of their education and health care works in order to determine who actually benefit from them in the Latin American social reality of conflict.¹³⁹

But for many religious the problem is not naivete but the fact that religious congregations have supported the interests and needs of the social elite. Radical change is therefore seen as necessary so that the education and health care institutions can support the poor's liberation.

While a change is seen as necessary, confusion exists over how to accomplish it. Some religious interpret Medellín's pastoral preference for the poor as demanding that existing institutions be maintained and transformed into agents for social change.¹⁴⁰ Other religious disagree, stating that Medellín's pastoral preference for the poor requires that religious abandon these traditional pastoral institutions in order to more directly serve the poor and their liberation.

A second critique is aimed at the parish, which is viewed as an insufficient structure for evangelization in Latin America. The shortage of priests and pastoral workers has had disastrous consequences on many parishes and resulted in a lack of adequate catechesis for the people. Furthermore, parishes are seen as having little influence among the poor because few attend Sunday Mass or participate in parish associations.¹⁴¹ The result is that the poor experience the parish neither as a faith community nor the Church as a living and active part of their lives.¹⁴² This critique is especially strong by women religious. Entering into parishes, the women religious do not see themselves as mere substitutes for absent priests.

139 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 13, 21, 23-24.

140 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 63-66.

141 "Vicariías de religiosas en acción," *Boletín CLAR* 7:3 (marzo 1970): 8; (A short report from the small community "Señor de los Dolores" in Caracas, Venezuela). F. Houtart, "The Roman Catholic Church and Social Change in Latin America," in *The Church and Social Change in Latin America*, ed. H. Landsberger (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970): 113-133, esp. 120. It is interesting here to add a few things, which demonstrate the seriousness of the problem. Houtart states that some parishes can contain 15,200 members and cover up to 2,400 square miles. G. Deelen, *A sociologia a serviço da pastoral*, vol. II. *A prática dominal* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1967): 77-84. This is a sociological study of Brazil which shows that weekly Sunday Mass attendance can be as low as 20% among the poor.

142 M.R. Castro, "Hacia una renovación de la pastoral religiosa en parroquias," *Boletín CLAR* 8:9 (septiembre 1970): 8; (from Peru).

Instead, the women religious try to bring feminine qualities, such as compassion and an appreciation of community, to their work among the people.¹⁴³ The women religious also stress the need for the parish to forge a new relationship with the people. To do this, women religious work alongside the people as a demonstration of equality with them. In short, women religious see themselves as renewers of parishes.¹⁴⁴

Women religious use the parish to meet the pastoral and sacramental needs of the people but in their efforts to forge a new relationship with the poor they enter into ever greater fields of activity beyond the parish.¹⁴⁵ Some continue to work in education or health care though now among the poor, while other sisters enter into youth work or family visiting. Through this increasing contact, women religious gain a deeper understanding about the poor's life and come into contact with local popular organizations. Women religious see this expanded contact as allowing them to make an ecclesial presence among people who had previously little or no exposure to the Church.¹⁴⁶

The parochial work of women religious is not, however, without problems. Though rarely commented upon, women religious sometimes encounter resistance from the poor who are unaccustomed to seeing sisters in pastoral work.¹⁴⁷

A third critique is directed against charitable assistance institutions which help the poor. This assistance work is criticized as meeting the immediate material needs of the poor in a way that supports the *status quo*. The charitable assistance institutions give sufficient help for the survival of immediate problems, but no efforts are made towards the empowerment of the poor. The result is that the poor's dependency and feeling of powerlessness are increased. While there is no demand for the termination of the Church's social assistance programs, the hope is that these could be coupled with efforts to conscientize the poor.¹⁴⁸

Liberation and human promotion

Like in the secularization perspective, a link is here seen between the human promotion and evangelization, but with an important difference, namely the work of human promotion is seen as a means for the empowerments of the poor to advance their own liberation.¹⁴⁹

143 C. Rojas, "Las religiosas en los países del Caribe," *Boletín CLAR* 8:10 (octubre 1970): 1, 3.

144 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 14-16. "Vida religiosa e inserción pastoral," *Boletín CLAR* 10:10 (octubre 1972): 6-7. "Experiencias de las religiosas en el Brasil," *Boletín CLAR* 7:2 (febrero 1969): 8.

145 "Vicarías de religiosas en acción," p. 8.

146 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 40-46. "Pequeñas comunidades," *Boletín CLAR* 8:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970): 6-7. J. Tierny, "Las religiosas dirigentes de parroquias," *Boletín CLAR* 9:8 (agosto 1971): 4-5.

147 CRB, "Las mujeres en la Iglesia," p. 12.

148 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 24-25.

149 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 42.

This liberating human promotion can take many forms. A major effort is placed on education work, where many religious use their past experience as teachers. Thus religious establish programs in literacy training, health care awareness, and conscientization among the poor. Human promotion also leads religious into work in community formation, youth groups, and development projects. The common trait which joins all these activities is the advancement of the poor.

Women religious have a special focus in their activity for the human promotion of the poor. They strive to conscientize women about their cultural position and improve their condition. For this purpose, women religious begin mother's groups, family support programs and special conscientization programs for women. An important component of this effort are the Bible groups. Reading and discussing the Bible in small groups, women discover a biblical message of equality between the sexes rather than a legitimation for male superiority. The Bible is thus converted from a means of ideological legitimation into one of conscientization and affirmation of the dignity of women.¹⁵⁰

One tension in the human promotion activities by religious is whether religious can engage in partisan political actions in support of the poor's liberation. For some religious such actions are legitimate, but others state that partisan political activity is the exclusive domain of the laity.¹⁵¹

Insertion among the poor

In order to have a liberating evangelization, religious see a need to insert themselves into the life and reality of the poor. This insertion can be accomplished in many ways¹⁵² ranging from pastoral work in a poor area to the formation of *CEBS*. One prominent and much praised way of insertion is the small community of religious. Choosing to live and work among the poor, the small communities are described as a concrete attempt to unite the religious' communal witness of material poverty with service to the poor. Nonetheless, the small communities are never a main focus of concern in *CLAR* discussions and are viewed as a special commitment to the poor, which not every religious could make.¹⁵³

150 "Religiosas colombianas trabajan," p. 2; (The Missionaries of the Presentation in Colombia establish a school to train campesina leaders). CRB, "Las mujeres en la Iglesia," p. 8-13. C. Rojas, "Las religiosas promotoras del desarrollo," p. 3-6. "Experiencias: Tiene sentido, hoy, la vida religiosa consagrada?" *Boletín CLAR* 11:8 (agosto 1973): 4.

151 Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 13-14. CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 57.

152 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 54-56, 62-65.

153 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 29, 55, 65-66. CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 40, 54. Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 25; (Religious are urged "to settle in subproletarian or proletarian neighborhoods and share directly their perspective"). "Nuestras hermanas de Venezuela," *Boletín CLAR* 10:9 (agosto 1972): 3. "Experiencias de las religiosas en el Brasil," *Boletín CLAR* 7:2 (febrero 1969): 8.

Insertion among the poor is seen as advancing the renewal of religious congregations as well as helping the poor. Contact with the poor allows religious to personally experience the poor's hospitality, generosity and friendship. From the poor, religious believe that they can learn these values, seen as necessary for the renewal and development of authentic religious communities. But the insertion by religious also yields benefits for the poor. Religious in discovering the poor's values can help to clarify and articulate these values so that they can serve as a basis for a future Latin American social order.¹⁵⁴

Insertion among the poor also challenges religious to live their evangelical poverty through a materially poor lifestyle. There are several reasons why this is seen as important. A materially poor lifestyle is viewed as a concrete way to witness the Gospel as religious demonstrate to the poor that their preaching of trust in God is inseparable from lifestyle. In this way, "the authenticity of our words and attitudes in the social apostolate has to be validated by a life of poverty."¹⁵⁵

Further importance is placed on the poor lifestyle by religious communities as a concrete expression of solidarity with the poor. Through acceptance of material insecurity and hardships, religious share, at least partially, the poor's reality as equals.¹⁵⁶

Finally, a poor lifestyle is seen as a form of fidelity to the option for the poor in evangelization. Religious "opt preferentially to a poor lifestyle with the poor, making known the Lord's preference for the poor and proclaiming the Kingdom."¹⁵⁷

Nonetheless, a tension is still seen between a communal witness of poverty and the pastoral institutions.¹⁵⁸ While a community's poor lifestyle is important for evangelization, it is again seen as detrimental to pastoral institutions (such as parishes, schools and hospitals). These institutions are judged as needing a level of efficiency and resources which make a poverty witness problematic.

154 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 40, 54. Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 21-22.

155 CLAR, "A cinco años de Medellín. El mensaje de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 11:9 (septiembre 1973): 3. Conferencia de los Religiosos de Perú, "Pobreza y compromiso en el desarrollo," *Boletín CLAR* 8:10 (octubre 1970): 1-2. CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 53-54, 61-69.

156 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 66. J. Tierny, "Las religiosas dirigentes de parroquias," p. 4-5.

157 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 54; ("optar preferencialmente por vivir pobres con los pobres, significando así la preferencia del Señor por ellos y anunciándoles así el Reino..."). Similarly in *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, p. 23; (although there it is "optar por los oprimidos"). These documents (1970 and 1972 respectively) show the influence which liberation theology has even at this early period on CLAR's discussions. F.Oz. de Urtaran, "La opción por los pobres. Un poco de historia," *Lumen* 36 (mayo-agosto 1987): 216-246. F. de Urtaran states that the term 'option for the poor' first appears in an 1970 article by Julio de Santa Ana.

158 Cf. p. 32.

Two different ways are seen of resolving this tension. A first solution is the previously seen separation between the religious community and any pastoral institution.¹⁵⁹ But other religious see such a separation as insufficient. Instead they argue that the religious witness of evangelical poverty should be primary and apply also to the evangelization of religious, communally or by pastoral institutions.¹⁶⁰

Involvement in the CEBs

The *CEBs* are viewed as allowing religious to provide a new formation in the faith and conscientization of the poor. Within the *CEBs*, new catechical methods are used for a more complete formation in the faith and a transformation of past belief. Furthermore, this occurs not individually but in a communal context. At the meetings of the *CEBs*, the poor evaluate communally their religious beliefs and identify any alienating elements in their religiosity.¹⁶¹

The *CEBs* are also locations where the poor are conscientized and taught a critical awareness about the socio-political reality. This is connected with the need by the poor for actions towards liberation and the replacement of unjust social structures.¹⁶²

An experience of a different reality, one of equality and freedom, is also provided by the *CEBs*. During the *CEB* meetings everyone is treated equally, whether lay or cleric. This produces an atmosphere of trust in which a community is formed which is in radical contrast to the poor's daily experience. The *CEBs* are a place where the poor experience themselves as a people, equal and free.¹⁶³

This experience of equality and freedom is seen as providing a special opportunity by women religious. For in the *CEBs*, this equality and freedom extends to women, breaking through cultural barriers. Women religious' goal is that through this experience of the *CEBs* new relationships between man and woman can be forged not based on cultural stereotypes and domination.¹⁶⁴

Pastoral de Conjunto

There are several ways in which religious cooperate with the Joint Pastoral Plans (*Pastoral de Conjunto*) and see themselves as supporting the local diocese's pastoral work. Religious assist the planning and evaluation of pastoral programs within the dioceses, which is seen as a practical way of improving evangelization. However, religious see their principal contribution to the Joint Pastoral Plans as

159 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 66-67.

160 Conferencia de los Religiosos de Perú, "Pobreza religiosa y compromiso," p. 1-2.

161 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 43-44. C. Rojas, "Las religiosas promotoras del desarrollo," p. 4-5. M.R. Castro, "Hacia una renovación de la pastoral religiosa," p. 8.

162 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 63.

163 C. Palmés, "Comunidades eclesiales de base y sus líderes religiosos en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 11:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1973): 1-4.

164 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 43-44.

their work in areas which previously had received little pastoral attention by the Church.¹⁶⁵

Women religious want to be viewed and treated as equal partners in the local diocese's pastoral work.¹⁶⁶ But some dioceses exclude them from the committees which formulate the Joint Pastoral Plans. This exclusion is seen as an example of paternalism by bishops and is a very sensitive issue. At a meeting of women religious in Bolivia one sister says, "We have almost the role of a house maid, treated as 'children of the house'...."¹⁶⁷

However, in spite of the Joint Pastoral Plans goals, some religious express discontent about its functioning. As Luis Patiño, then Secretary General, dryly observes a *Pastoral de Conjunto* must truly be *conjunto* (joint-jk).¹⁶⁸

165 CLAR, *Pobreza y vida religiosa*, p. 63.

166 CLAR, *La religiosa hoy*, p. 46. "En las conferencias nacionales," *Boletín CLAR* 8:10 (octubre 1970): 6; (Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico). "Las religiosas de Bolivia y la integración en la Pastoral de Conjunto," *Boletín CLAR* 6:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1968): 6; (Bolivia). "Integración de actividades de las religiosas en el plan nacional de pastoral," *Boletín CLAR* 7:2 (febrero 1969): 7; (Argentina).

167 "Vida religiosa e inserción pastoral," *Boletín CLAR* 10:10 (octubre 1972): 6; ("Tenemos casi la figura de la empleada de casa, tratada como 'hijas de casa'...."). This is extremely strong since empleadas (i.e. live-in maids) in Bolivia are often treated as slaves, working long hours for little or no salary.

168 L. Patiño, "Estamos decididos a vivir el profetismo," *Boletín CLAR* 11:7 (julio 1973): 4-5.

4 Theological foundations

4.0 Introduction

Chapter 3 examined a shift within CLAR's discussions from concern about pastoral activity to broader concerns about the need for an evangelization which could respond to the challenges facing Latin America.

Though there was a general consensus that evangelization by religious should make a clear response to the Latin American context, differences existed about the principal challenges which must be addressed. From the secularization perspective, religious gave evangelization little attention. Nonetheless it was believed that religious could link their evangelization with human promotion activities in order to advance the development of Latin America.

For religious who adopted the gender or dependency perspective, evangelization was seen as able to support liberation struggles of the poor. This support included human promotion activity but also a critique of existing pastoral structures, which were judged as ineffective and inadequate in the face of the challenges posed by the need for liberation.

But activity alone was insufficient, religious had also to insert themselves in the poor's life and reality. Some religious did this through pastoral work while others re-located to poor neighborhoods, living in small communities. As part of this insertion religious participated in the *CEBs* which were seen as valuable means for faith formation, conscientization and additionally provided an experience of freedom and equality.

Chapter 4 follows earlier reflections which were made in Chapter 2 on the identity of religious life, yet with an important difference. Chapter 4 focusses on religious life identity when it is discussed without an explicit connection to the socio-political context. Thus in this chapter, certain themes are presented which are understood as foundational for religious life identity, regardless of context.¹⁶⁹

169 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu de las comunidades religiosas de América Latina*, 4th ed., Colección CLAR 14 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1973; reprint Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 12-16, 43, 51, 63-73 (page references taken from reprint edition). *La vida según el Espíritu* sees challenges in Latin America as flowing both from the need for liberation and the worldwide process of secularization. But the identity of religious life is not seen related to either.

Chapter Four is divided into two parts. First, there is an examination of the 1971 publication *La pobreza evangélica hoy*.¹⁷⁰ While never having a major impact in CLAR discussions, this book nevertheless highlights two important issues facing religious worldwide during the 1970s. *La pobreza evangélica hoy* is for that reason valuable, allowing a fuller understanding of the challenges which CLAR and the Latin American religious are compelled to address. In the second part of Chapter 4 attention is given to *La vida según el Espíritu*, the most famous and influential CLAR publication.¹⁷¹ *La vida según el Espíritu*'s importance is not only due to its influence but as a reflection of the thinking by Latin American religious on basic issues of religious identity. *La vida según el Espíritu* is the final product of a year long process of reflection involving some of Latin America's most prominent theologians¹⁷² and responses from over a hundred and ten congregations.¹⁷³ The final document is approved at the the 1973 Fifth CLAR General Assembly (Medellín, Colombia), making it an official position of CLAR.¹⁷⁴

170 J. Dupont et al., *La pobreza evangélica hoy*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección Perspectivas 1 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1971).

171 M. Perdí, "Informe de presidencia. XXV años de reflexión," *Nuevo Mundo*, vol. 116 (marzo-abril 1984): 141. L. Boff, "El reto de la vida consagrada a la luz de Puebla," in *Puebla, panorama de la teología latinoamericana V*, ed. SELADOC (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1981): 325. Boff says that *La vida según el Espíritu* is one of the four most important issues of the *Colección CLAR* series before Puebla. L. Patiño, "Informe del secretariado [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," *Boletín CLAR* 14:2-3 (febrero-marzo 1976): 13-14; (There is a wide distribution of *La vida según el Espíritu* throughout Latin America and by 1976 there are three editions with 16,750 copies in print (a normal edition has about 4,250) and it is even published in Italy. "La vida según el Espíritu en las comunidades religiosas de América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 11:5 (mayo 1973): 4-5. This is a reprint of a part of *La vida según el Espíritu*. *La vida según el Espíritu* is used by many national conferences for days of reflections: *Boletín CLAR* 12:2 (febrero 1974): 7-8 and *Boletín CLAR* 14:3 (marzo 1974): 6-8, (Colombia); *Boletín CLAR* 12:1 (enero 1974): 1-5, (Guatemala); *Boletín CLAR* 11:5 (mayo 1973): 8, (Nicaragua); *Boletín CLAR* 11:7 (julio 1973): 6, (Brazil); *Boletín CLAR* 11:3 (marzo 1973): 2, (IPL, the Instituto de Liturgia Pastoral in Medellín).

172 L. Patiño, "Quinta Asamblea: Informe [V Asamblea General, Medellín]," p. 13; (Among the participants present are: L. Boff, E. Delaney, A. Paoli, N. Zavallos. Secretariado general de la CLAR, "La vida según el Espíritu en las comunidades religiosas de América Latina. Texto de Estudio," *Vida en Fraternidad* 10 (mayo-junio 1972): 15-50; (the Work Document for *La vida según el Espíritu*).

173 L. Patiño, "Qué es la CLAR?" p. 3. Patiño makes clear that the work documents are not official but only for study and reflection. M. Edwards, "Quinta Asamblea General: Informe del Presidente [V Asamblea General, Medellín]," *Boletín CLAR* 11:1-2 (enero-febrero 1973): 8. President Edwards mentions that there is opposition to the publication of these work documents. One possible reason for this opposition to *La vida según el Espíritu* could be the strong influence which liberation theology had on it. The bibliography from this Work Document includes: G. Gutiérrez (*Hacia una teología de la liberación*), P. Freire (*Pedagogía del oprimido*), H. Assmann (*Opresión-liberación. Desafío a los cristianos*), J. Croatto (*Exodo-liberación. Hombres nuevos hacia un mundo nuevo*), E. Dussel (*América Latina y conciencia cristiana*), E. Pironio (2 of his works), and J.M.R. Tillard (3 of his books).

174 "Nuestra Quinta Asamblea General día a día," *Boletín CLAR* 11:1-2 (enero-febrero 1973): 3-6. Leonardo Boff introduces the discussion on the text.

La vida según el Espíritu provides a very coherent and insightful picture of how CLAR views the identity of religious life. This chapter focuses on six themes, central to the *La vida según el Espíritu*:¹⁷⁵ the experience of God, following of Jesus, the evangelical counsels, religious consecration, the charism of religious life, and community. But there are also tensions which lay beneath the surface and become evident through close examination of the 1972 Work Document for *La vida según el Espíritu*.

4.1 La pobreza evangélica hoy

La pobreza evangélica hoy is a collection of speeches given at a 1970 Franciscan conference on evangelical poverty. Though not all of the speeches are relevant to this study, two issues arise which have a direct bearing on religious life identity. A first issue is the understanding of evangelical poverty, which is a source of much unease among Latin American religious, especially those who support the liberation of the poor.

The second issue is the biblical foundation of religious life, and whether there is a specific scriptural text which proves Jesus' institution of the religious life.

Evangelical poverty

Jacques Dupont (France) discusses evangelical poverty and the poor as presented in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.¹⁷⁶ He observes that the Acts of the Apostles treats neither the question of the poor nor demands that Christians renounce material goods. Rather, the focus of Acts is the Jerusalem community where all goods are shared so that no Christian is in need.¹⁷⁷

Dupont contrasts this communal model of evangelical poverty to the Gospels where Jesus demands that the disciples renounce all possessions in order to follow Him. This renunciation is viewed as a necessary prerequisite for discipleship because money and possessions are considered a threat, tempting a person to self reliance rather than trust in God.¹⁷⁸

Dupont also analyzes how the poor are viewed in the New Testament. For him, Jesus' healing the sick and preaching to the poor reveal that God has a special concern for the poor, who suffer injustice, and that the Kingdom's fullness shall free them from all oppression.¹⁷⁹

175 There are other themes discussed in this book (e.g. prayer, meditation, liturgy) which do not concern this study.

176 J. Dupont, "Los pobres y la pobreza en los Evangelios y en los Hechos," in *La pobreza evangélica hoy*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección Perspectivas 1 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1971): 27-44.

177 J. Dupont, "Los pobres y la pobreza," p. 29-32.

178 J. Dupont, "Los pobres y la pobreza," p. 38-42.

179 J. Dupont, "Los pobres y la pobreza," p. 32-38.

Biblical basis of religious life

Another French exegete, Simón Légasse, examines the three Synoptic versions of the story of the rich young man in order to see if it can indeed be seen as a biblical foundation for the religious life. This is a controversial question since prior to the Second Vatican Council, religious congregations considered indisputable that their life was directly instituted by Jesus. They based this claim upon the New Testament story of the rich young man (esp. Matt. 19:16-26). This story was further interpreted as making a distinction between 'precepts' and 'counsels'. While all Christians are seen as bound by precepts, only religious are obligated to observe the counsels in order to live a more perfect form of Christian life.

Through a careful analysis of the texts (Mark 10:23-31; Luke 18:18-30; and Matt. 19:16-26) Légasse concludes that, while each version highlights different elements, none support the traditional interpretation. The story of the rich young man makes no distinction between common Christian life and a special more radical form, based on counsels. On the contrary, the Gospels point to a common duty of disponibility and openness to God, binding on all Christians, which the rich young man was unwilling to accept. Therefore, for Légasse, the story of the rich young man refers to the common Christian vocation and is not a proof of Jesus' institution of religious life.¹⁸⁰

4.2 La vida según el Espíritu

La vida según el Espíritu articulates what are seen as the basic theological foundations of the religious life, which cannot be found solely through the observance of rules and regulations. While observance of these is important, it is not the core of religious life, which is a 'life according to the Spirit'.

The experience of God

For *La vida según el Espíritu* the basis of religious life is the experience of God, which is possible for everyone regardless of religion. An experience of God begins with an awareness of God's love and transforming presence in the world. This awareness is not divorced from reality but integrates all aspects of a person's life, including action.¹⁸¹

For Christians, the experience God is concretely modelled by the life of Jesus of Nazareth. He is the concrete revelation of God's love and that all people are sons and daughters of God. Through accepting the attitudes of Jesus and following His example, Christians can experience God as Jesus did and center their lives on this experience.

180 S. Légasse, "El llamamiento del Rico," in *La pobreza evangélica hoy*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección Perspectivas 1 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1971): 45-62.

181 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 18-19.

Among religious communities the experience of God has yet another dimension, it is communal. Religious life is seen as a common project which strives to communally root its life and activity around God.¹⁸² This communal dimension of the experience of God is the basis of religious life and also fulfills a very important public role. Because a communal experience of God is the foundation of their life, religious are able to witness to all people, showing the primacy of God.¹⁸³

Following Jesus

The experience of God leads Christians, including religious, to follow Jesus and to model their lives on His actions. This following of Jesus has three inter-related dimensions. First, there should be an ongoing search for God and a desire to discern His/Her Will in human history. Second, this search for God is inseparable from love of neighbor and requires that Christians work for the elimination of all barriers, personal and social, which block full communion between people. Finally, the following of Jesus impels Christians to work for the creation of a just world and the change of unjust social structures.¹⁸⁴

Consecration-mission

La vida según el Espíritu sees its treatment of religious consecration as a break with past understandings which are viewed as legalistic and elitist. Formerly, religious saw their consecration as a special call to a life of perfection, through the observance of rules. Religious understood themselves as a spiritual elite who led a life of renunciation, which entailed the refusal to exercise certain basic human rights (such as marriage and personal property). Accompanying this life of renunciation was a belief that religious had to distance themselves from 'the world', human society and its affairs (*fuga mundi*), in order to follow a life of Christian perfection. *La vida según el Espíritu* rejects both this elitism and the need for religious to separate themselves from social concerns.

Rather than this past understanding, *La vida según el Espíritu* sees religious consecration as a public commitment to radically live the baptismal consecration of all Christians. This radical manner of life demands that religious be clear signs of the Kingdom, manifesting a relationship to others which reveals God's love. Yet, for *La vida según el Espíritu*, this eschatological witness is inseparable from incarnation in human society, which is accomplished through mission. This mission by religious is seen as demanding: the proclamation of the Gospel values through example, a prophetic denunciation of injustice, and work for the construc-

182 Cf. p. 50. This is the same way that J.M.R. Tillard described religious life.

183 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 18-23. Reference is made to LG 44; PC 1 (that the religious life is based on the experience of God); and PC 5 (that religious life is a communal public following of Jesus).

184 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 32-36; (GS 43 and GS 1 are cited as proof that Christians should be concerned about society).

tion of the Kingdom.¹⁸⁵ Religious consecration has thus two inseparable components, eschatological witness and mission.¹⁸⁶

The Work Document for *La vida según el Espíritu* goes further and states that past legalism in religious life has retarded the personal growth of religious. The Work Document states that:

"Religious life has, here and there, historically had a castrating function: depriving the person of the ability to feel well about things; burdening life with complicated observances, devotions and rituals. Not always were religious made into creators of happiness and Christian hope. Frequently they made sadness and legalism into the Good News of the Lord."¹⁸⁷

Additionally, this legalism led to a dualistic manner of thinking, which separated spirituality from daily life. Evidence of this dualism is, for the Work Document, apparent around discussions of 'spiritual life', which treat spirituality as if it were separable from material reality.¹⁸⁸

Finally, the eschatological witness of religious is affected by legalism in religious communities. Many people, seeing the rigidity of religious communities, conclude that religious are not witnesses of the Kingdom but odd and alienated from their own humanity as well as other people.¹⁸⁹

The evangelical counsels

Though the eschatological witness of religious and mission are joined, a tension remains between the renunciation aspect of religious life, which distances religious from some normal human rights/goods, and mission which demands incarnation in human society. The problem is that when one of these two elements is over-emphasized, the witness of religious life suffers. Thus a balance is necessary between renunciation and incarnation and this is achieved through the evangelical

185 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p 21-23, 38-41, 52-55, 64-67. J. Comblin, "Os fundamentos teológicos da vida religiosa," *REB* (1969): 308-352. Idem, "Os religiosos e o mundo," *ibid*, p 550-579. Idem, "Os votos e a vida religiosa," *ibid*, p 850-880. *La vida según el Espíritu* does not refer to José Comblin on this point, though it is interesting to note that this is his position. In this series of three articles, Comblin describes the religious life as providing a negative witness in world and Church. His views are very influential in Brasil until his expulsion in 1972. Comblin's influence can also be seen in the work by G Pennock, *Vida religiosa y vocación bautismal*, Colección CLAR 17 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1976, repr., Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1973) 10-12.

186 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p 38, 52-55

187 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "La vida según el Espíritu. Texto de Estudio," p 20, ("La vida religiosa tuvo históricamente, aquí y allí, una función castradora. privó al hombre de saber 'sentir bien' las cosas, cargó la vida con complicadas observancias, preces y ritos. No siempre los religiosos se hicieron creadores de alegría y esperanza cristianas [sic]. Frecuentemente tornaron triste y legalista la Buena Nueva del Señor")

188 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "La vida según el Espíritu. Texto de Estudio," p 21. Therefore, the authors prefer to speak over "la vida según el espíritu"

189 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "La vida según el Espíritu. Texto de Estudio," p 20-23

counsels. The evangelical counsels allow religious to dedicate themselves to mission while simultaneously making an eschatological witness. Each of the three evangelical counsels is briefly described by *La vida según el Espíritu* in order to show how they are linked to mission and make an eschatological witness.

Evangelical poverty gives religious a freedom in meeting the needs of mission. Through this counsel, religious do not allow possessions to prevent disponibility to the fulfillment of God's Will. According to *La vida según el Espíritu*, evangelical poverty should lead religious to solidarity with the poor, including a sharing in their material want. This solidarity expresses an eschatological witness in the face of Latin American social injustice, showing that people are more valuable than possessions.

The evangelical counsel of chastity frees a religious for mission. Living a celibate life, without the concern for a wife (or husband), religious are freer for mission and the construction of community among people. In the face of social attitudes which encourage egoism and the exploitation of sexuality, chastity is a powerful eschatological witness for human dignity.

Evangelical obedience requires the partial surrender of one's freedom to a religious superior. For *La vida según el Espíritu*, obedience is not just individual but a communal obligation that also requires the continual discernment of God's Will. This discernment leads a religious community to a continuous search for ways in which it can respond to God's Will and further His/Her mission. In the context of Latin America, filled with oppression, religious obedience demonstrates an eschatological witness that a community can live through co-responsibility and without domination.

Finally, *La vida según el Espíritu* in its discussion of the evangelical counsels gives the renunciation aspect of religious life a broader meaning. While still a rejection of some human rights/goods, renunciation is also understood as a form of social critique of all social injustice and conditions which are contrary to the Kingdom.¹⁹⁰

The charism of religious life

Religious are seen as possessors of a special charism from the Holy Spirit, who is active in human history motivating and encouraging people towards God. The

190 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 39-41; (Cited as support are: *ET* 20 and *PC* 13 [poverty], *ET* 27 [chastity], and *ET* 14 [obedience]). In *La vida según el Espíritu* the traditional ordering of the vows is followed, namely poverty, chastity and obedience. P. Molinari and P. Gumbel, *Chapter VI of the Dogmatic Constitution 'Lumen Gentium' on Religious Life* (Rome: Ancora, 1987): 82-89. This ordering is not generally followed by the Council (*LG* 42; 43; 46; 50; *PC* 12; 25). In each sections, chastity is listed first. For Molinari, this arrangement is deliberate in order to highlight the positive value of religious life rather than its negative effects (i.e. a deprivation of personal property).

Holy Spirit is seen as giving charisms throughout history for the growth and development of the Church.¹⁹¹ One example of a charism is religious life, which is founded by men and women who have responded to the Holy Spirit and addressed some historical or ecclesial need. Through religious congregations, this charism of the original founder/ess is transmitted to others over the course of time.¹⁹²

But as these original charisms of the founder/ess responded to historical or ecclesial needs, so also do they bear characteristics and traits from the time of their foundation. This demands that all religious congregations engage in a continual process of interpreting their founding charisms in the face of an ever-changing history. For *La vida según el Espíritu*, this interpretation of the founding charisms begins not with reference to the past but the present. In this way, religious life and activities are judged in relation to contemporary challenges which flow from the socio-political and cultural reality. The justification for using the present as a starting point for the interpretation of a founder/ess' charism is pneumatological; the Spirit calls religious in the present not the past.¹⁹³

La vida según el Espíritu realizes that this manner for the interpretation of the founder/ess' charism can produce conflict within congregations. Some religious will resist the interpretation of the foundational charisms in relation to the needs of Latin America. To highlight its own position, *La vida según el Espíritu* says, "As Tertullian said; 'Christ did not say I am tradition but that I am the Truth.'"¹⁹⁴

The Work Document also contains indications that the charism of the founders is viewed with suspicion by some religious. An initial reason for this suspicion is that the congregational charisms are frequently used as a subterfuge. Those who oppose the renewal of religious life often protest that change in their communal life or evangelization are contrary to founder/ess' original intentions. In this way, the charism of the founders has been used to retard renewal within many religious congregations. Yet another source of suspicion flows from an interpretation of Vatican II. For the Work Document to *La vida según el Espíritu*, the Council had deliberately chosen to de-emphasize the charism of the founders. It says that:

"The contribution of Vatican II stresses strongly the line of unity in the Church, that in some way, puts some distance from the various families of religious; it would be better to think of them as one family of consecrated without further distinctions. The charisms of the founders would become more a individual expression of life without institutionalization."¹⁹⁵

191 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 26-30, 51-52; (I Cor. 12:7 is cited).

192 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 42.

193 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 42-46.

194 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 43; (from *De Virginis* 1,1).

195 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "La vida según el Espíritu... Texto de Estudio," p. 27; ("...el aporte del Vaticano II marca muy fuertemente una línea de unidad en la Iglesia que, de alguna manera, pone muy en segundo término la multiplicidad de familias religiosas;

Religious community

It was seen that very early CLAR's reflections stressed the communal, rather than individualistic aspect of religious life. Religious life was seen as a common 'project', witnessing the Kingdom and showing that all people need community. However, in order to make this witness, there must, in fact, be a living and authentic fraternity. For *La vida según el Espíritu*, a religious community needs to satisfy three needs in order to be alive and authentic.

A religious community should first encourage the growth of a communal spirit by the individual members. In order to develop this communal spirit, change is necessary so that each community member leaves behind egoistical and individualistic attitudes, which block concern for others. Further, a communal spirit can grow only if religious learn that there is no dichotomy between the community and the individual. In fact, for *La vida según el Espíritu*, the opposite is the case. An individual can only develop within the context of a community. Finally, dialogue and co-responsibility should be adopted, giving all community members a role and responsibility in the governance of the community.

Second, a religious community needs to help religious in their personal development so that they become balanced, healthy people. One problem, impeding such development, is that many religious see a split between community life and pastoral work (*ser & hacer*). Communities should help religious to realize that their life is not divisible into personal and public spheres, but rather is a unified whole. The pastoral actions of religious are an integral aspect of the community's life; just as community life should flow into all forms of public witness. Community should help religious to integrate their pastoral work into community life.¹⁹⁶ Finally, the religious community needs to discern the calls of the Spirit. A listening attitude and dialogue among the members of community is a prerequisite in the discernment of how the Spirit is calling religious to act.¹⁹⁷

se pensaría más bien en una familia de consagrados sin ulteriores especificaciones. Los carismas de los fundadores pasarían a ser simplemente expresión de vida más bien individuales sin ninguna institucionalización") A similar opinion is given by L. Patiño, "Qué es la CLAR?" p. 6-7. In an interview, Patiño says, "I am convinced speaking generally in non-judicial terms, that there only exists one large family of religious in the world."

196 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 56-58.

197 CLAR, *La vida según el Espíritu*, p. 51-56. Secretariado general de la CLAR, "La vida según el Espíritu. Texto de Estudio," p. 35. There is a brief discussion of the way to do such communal discernment. Although there is no mention in the text, this process bears a strong similarity to the 'revision of life'. This was a practice of group reflection [*ver-juzgar-actuar*] which was begun by Joseph Cardijn (later appointed cardinal) in Belgium, who was a pioneer in the Catholic Action movement. It is mentioned in two Medellín documents: *Juventud* 6 and *Pastoral de Elites* 14. J. B. Maraval, *Atividades apostólicas das religiosas e revisão da vida*, Vivência Religiosa 8 (Paris: Éditions Fleurus, 1966, Petrópolis: Vozes, 1968) (page references from the reprint edition). R. Guerre, *Espiritualidade do sacerdote diocesano*, 2nd ed., Edições Paulinas (São Paulo, 1987), 114-127. Maraval and Guerre discuss the 'revision of life'.

Part II
Section II

From 1974 until Puebla (1979)

Introduction

Section one revealed a plurality of perspectives from which Latin American could be seen. The secularization perspective focussed on the development of Latin America, interpreting the rapid socio-economic changes of the early 1970s as part of a worldwide process of change, which offered hope for a better future. Contrasted to this perspective was a vision of Latin America from the theory of dependency. This perspective concentrated upon the massive poverty of Latin America and viewed the socio-political and cultural reality in structural terms. Latin America was seen as enchained by international economic structures which preserved a *status quo* in which some nations are dependent and left with no chance for economic development. This international relationship of dependency was also seen as affecting the internal social structures of Latin America, producing social injustice and massive poverty. While there was a general consensus that this situation must be changed, differences of opinion appeared over how this could be done. For some religious, a reform of existing structures was possible, while others saw this as impossible and instead sought new social structures. Finally, gender offered a third perspective which centered its concern around the oppression of women. While accepting the dependency theory's structural view of reality, the gender perspective stressed the cultural elements of oppression.

Section II begins with 1974, and continues the examination of CLAR's reflections on the Latin American context, religious life and evangelization. Within these reflections, there is a deepening discussion on many previously seen themes as well as the emergence of new issues.

The year 1974 is an important turning point in CLAR's reflections, in which a shift is made away from this plurality of perspectives on the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality. Three events mark this shift: the approval by the CLAR General Board of *Dimensión política de la vida religiosa*, a clear rejection of the secularization perspective in CLAR discussions, and, after 1974, an almost complete disappearance of the gender perspective.

After 1974 CLAR accepts dependency and the structural view of reality as facts which no longer need justification. This acceptance does not end reflection but rather results in an unambiguous decision that Latin American religious should support the poor's liberation. Though liberation becomes the focus, it is seen as a complex task since dependency has affected all socio-political and cultural institutions. With this in mind, Latin American religious try to understand the

functioning of Latin America's internal social structures by looking to the past as well as the present.

While attempting to understand these internal social structures, CLAR and the Latin American religious' main concern lies elsewhere, namely in the world of the poor. For within that world are victims of unjust social structures as well as values which can be the seeds for a new Latin American society.

A shift to one perspective

The Thirteenth CLAR General Board meets in February of 1974 (Costa Rica) and the most important item on the agenda is the document, *Dimensión política de la vida religiosa*, prepared from responses to the earlier discussed *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*. Because of the controversial nature of the topic (i.e. religious life and politics), some members of the General Board recommend a delay in the approval of *Dimensión política de la vida religiosa* until the 1976 General Assembly. In spite of this recommendation *Dimensión política de la vida religiosa* is overwhelmingly approved,¹⁹⁸ although it is agreed to withhold publication until CELAM and SCRIS approve the text. But approval proves difficult to obtain, as both CELAM and the Sacred Congregation raise objections, which CLAR tries to satisfy but without success. The result is that this important CLAR study is never published.¹⁹⁹

The CLAR General Board's approval makes *Dimensión política* an official CLAR document. Although it discusses some issues not found in *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, its perspective on the Latin American socio-cultural reality is identical. Latin America is trapped in inequitable international structures of dependency which warp all aspects of Latin American reality. Further, the influence of Gramsci is still apparent in its treatment of historical projects and the poor's culture.²⁰⁰

But approval of *Dimensión política* alone is insufficient to indicate a shift in CLAR's perspective on the Latin American reality. For the CLAR General Board had

198 CLAR, *Dimensión política de la vida religiosa. Perspectivas latino-americanas*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR (Bogotá: CLAR, 1974), mimeo. Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Dimensión política de la vida religiosa. Perspectivas latinoamericanas. Resultado de la consulta a la jerarquía" (Bogotá: CLAR, 1974), introduction, mimeo. CLAR President Palmés states that *Dimensión política* is approved by 24 out of the 25 delegates present at the General Board meeting in Costa Rica.

199 L. Patiño, "Informe del secretariado general. Actividades CLAR [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," *Boletín CLAR* 13:4 (abril-mayo 1975): 11-12. Patiño says that L. Boff and J.C. Scannone make a redaction which it is hoped will win approval from CELAM and SCRIS. Idem, "Informe del secretariado [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 12. Nonetheless, discussion between the three parties ends in August 1975 without an agreement.

200 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 1-4. CLAR, "Dimensión política...Resultado de la consulta de la jerarquía," p. 3, 17. CELAM and CRIS see the term 'historical project' as too vague. CELAM wonders if there can, in fact, be one such historical project for all of Latin America.

approved other studies previously which had different perspectives on the Latin American reality: *La religiosa hoy, Pobreza y vida religiosa* and *La vida según el Espíritu*. Thus along with the approval of *Dimensión política*, there also appears for the first time in CLAR discussions a clear rejection of the secularization perspective.

Información teológica y pastoral is written by theologians of IPLA and is published by CLAR as a general introduction to current theological and pastoral thinking. In *Información teológica y pastoral* there is a clear rejection of the secularization perspective as adequate for Latin America. This rejection is based on scientific and theological grounds.

Although seeing positive features of secularization, *Información teológica y pastoral* rejects it on scientific grounds as unable to provide an accurate view of Latin America. The basis for this rejection is the uniqueness of the Latin American context. Unlike Europe and North America, Latin America's colonial structures still exist, blocking development and progress. Thus, in the context of Latin America the secularization perspective is unable to focus on the key challenge, namely how to escape from this colonial past. Escape from the past, according to *Información teológica y pastoral* demands not reform of existing social structures but liberation and the creation of new social structures.²⁰¹

Accompanying this scientific rejection the secularization perspective is an attack on its theological importance. Latin America is seen as needing to formulate its own theology, reflecting the reality of the continent. However, the secularization perspective is judged as an inadequate starting point for a Latin American theology because it fails to take into account international structures of dependency. A further critique of the secularization perspective's use for a Latin American theology flows from a belief that in Latin America secularization is expressed principally through political actions, rather than in atheism or a loss of religiosity. Thus for Latin America, West European secularization perspectives are inadequate²⁰² and what is necessary is a theology which stresses the need for liberation. *Información teológica y pastoral* identifies three theological dimensions to liberation. First, liberation is connected to salvation which is understood as freedom from sin and its consequences. This salvation is being achieved in history through a process of liberation. Second, liberation is seen as enabling the human person to grow in awareness of his/her responsibility and ability to change social structures. Finally, liberation is joined to the need for socio-political and cultural structures which are freed from dependency.²⁰³

Past theological interpretations of secularization are also attacked. There is a rejection of the belief that the process of secularization is a natural development

201 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 20-24. Also in: C. Palmés, *Teología bautismal y vida religiosa*, Colección CLAR 16 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1974): 14.

202 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 24, 39-41, 47-48.

203 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 42-43.

from biblical ideas. Rather secularization is seen as having a more recent origin, arising from the European Enlightenment. Furthermore, secularization is no longer viewed as leading to a purification of the faith and liberation of humanity. Under the influence of secularization, faith is not purified but privatized, leading to a separation of religion and daily life. Thus far from liberating humanity, secularization is now judged as alienating, through encouraging an individualism which separates people and thereby weakens their ability to cooperate with others for shaping history.²⁰⁴

Información teológica y pastoral, while not an official CLAR document is important because it is designed as a pastoral reference book for all Latin American religious. But this is not the only criticism of the secularization perspective.

After *Información teológica y pastoral*, other reasons appear for the rejection of the secularization perspective. First of all, the secularization perspective is seen as too optimistic in its view of Latin American economic growth under existing social structures. As proof that this optimism is misplaced, Leonardo Boff points to the 1960s when Brazil had a high level of economic growth rate, yet the poor's condition deteriorated.²⁰⁵

An additional criticism is that secularization instead of advancing social progress is, in fact, a factor which blocks social change. Through modern technology and mass media which secularization brings, the poor's oppression is further disguised, preventing an awareness of the actual Latin American social reality and the need for change.²⁰⁶

The CLAR theological team views the secularization perspective as naive. Secularization is seen, not as a nameless worldwide process, but rather as an external threat to Latin America which affects only the social elites. Through secularization the Latin American rich adopt values and lifestyles which are more European or North American than Latin American. This further alienates the elites from majority of the Latin American people and binds them ever closer to exploitative social structures of dependency. From this observation, the CLAR theologians conclude that secularization is not just a nameless historical process, but a threat from the West:

"In this manner, the temptation of progress marked with the sign of secularization constitutes a threat that the modern society of the powerful nations use against nations in the periphery."²⁰⁷

204 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 21-24. C. Palmés, *Teología bautismal y vida religiosa*, p. 14.

205 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 26 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977; repr., Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1975): 42-45. L. Boff, *Testigos de Dios en el corazón del mundo*, trans. M. Díez Presa, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Instituto Teológico de Vida Religiosa, 1985): 49-112. This contains a reprint of *La experiencia de Dios* along with several other works by Boff on religious life.

206 C. de Lora, "Medellín y la catequesis," ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, in *Los religiosos en la pastoral*, Colección CLAR 34 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 64.

207 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas de la vida religiosa en América Latina*,

Finally, after 1974, there is an almost complete disappearance of the gender perspective²⁰⁹ But, unlike with the secularization perspective, no reason is given for its disappearance in CLAR discussions, although an explanation can be inferred While the gender perspective focusses on the cultural elements of oppression, it also accepts the dependency analysis and the need for liberation It is possible that the gender perspective after 1974 is swallowed up into this more general concern, the liberation of Latin America.²¹⁰

Colección CLAR 24 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1975) 23, ("De este modo, la tentación del progreso marcado con el signo de la secularización constituye la amenaza que la sociedad moderna de los países hegemónicos ejerce contra los países de la periferia") Also Idem, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," *SEDOC* (abril 1978) 899-900 "Detalle de actividades," *Boletín CLAR* 17 3-4 (marzo-abril 1979) 16 "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla" does not list an author but the last-mentioned article makes clear that it is the work of the CLAR theological team

208 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p v It is interesting to remember that *La vida según el Espíritu* was approved in 1973 by the CLAR General Assembly and, as previously mentioned, has a view of reality which is a mix between dependency and secularization, wherein both are seen as challenges for Latin America *Dimensión política* notes *La vida según el Espíritu*'s attention to secularization It goes on to claim that its own vision of the Latin American reality, using a dependency perspective, is a continuation of *La vida según el Espíritu* The difference is attributed to the fact that *Dimensión política* looks at the political dimensions of religious life, unlike *La vida según el Espíritu* The secularization perspective is strikingly absent in later CLAR reflections Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed, *Nuevas perspectivas de la vida religiosa en América*, Colección CLAR 21 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1975) 17-20, 53-58, 154-158 At the Second Inter-American meeting of religious from Latin America, Canada and the United States, CLAR delegates make no mention of secularization while their North American counterparts see it (though calling it humanization) as a major challenge L Boff, *Vida religiosa y secularización* V Moreira da Silva, *Compromiso religioso en la historia*, Colección CLAR 27 (Rio de Janeiro CRB, 1974, repr Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1976) (page references from reprint edition) The last two books, published by CLAR after 1974, focus on secularization but are reprints of earlier CRB works

209 Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed, *Nuevas perspectivas*, p 23-24, 65-78 CLAR's presentation at the Second Interamerican Meeting of Religious makes no mention of women religious, while they are a concern for both the Canadian and American religious conferences Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p 84-85 IPLA, "La mujer en América Latina," in *Información teológica y pastoral sobre América Latina*, ed S Galilea, Colección Perspectivas 4 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1974) 79-84 J Marins, "Desafío a la misión evangelizadora de la religiosa en el continente americano," in *Los religiosos en la pastoral*, ed secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 34 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1977) 85-92 In the above two articles there is mention of women religious but only in their ministerial function within the Latin American Church V Moreira da Silva, "La religiosa y la pastoral en América Latina," in *Los religiosos en la pastoral*, p 78-84 Within CLAR discussions, this article offers the only clear gender perspective after 1974

210 I Gebara, "Contribuição para uma espiritualidade a partir da mulher," *Grande Sinal* 41 (maio-junho 1987) 261-272 Gebara mentions that one problem which a feminist spirituality faces in Brazil is that some would interpret this as a move to separate women's

CLAR's methodology

CLAR continues the use of an inductive methodology, allowing problems and issues for reflection to surface from the experiences of religious. In order to more clearly understand the relationship between the concrete practice of religious and theological reflection, there is discussion about praxis. Likewise, CLAR theologians demonstrate interest in the *comunidades insertas*. In 1977 the CLAR theological team meets various religious from *comunidades insertas* in gatherings throughout Latin America. Reflections from these gatherings are the starting point for an important CLAR study on ecclesiology, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*.²¹¹

CLAR's organizational initiatives

CLAR intensifies its organizational support for the renewal and adaptation of religious life to the Latin America. In 1974 the official CLAR team of theologians (*equipo de teólogos*) is established for the reflection of issues, raised by the CLAR leadership.²¹² An additional organizational initiative is the formulation of the CLAR Three Year Plan (*Plan Global*), beginning in 1976. These are general policy statements, approved by the General Assembly, which set goals and concerns for CLAR until the next General Assembly (e.g. three years).²¹³

concerns from the common need by all for liberation. Z. F. Ribeiro, "O papel da mulher como pessoa nos ministerios," in *Ministerios e teologia*, Teologia em Dialogo (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1985) 47. Ribeiro mentions that at Puebla liberation of the women is subsumed under the needs for general liberation (*Puebla* 847).

211 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, Colección CLAR 33 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977) 7. The CLAR theologians meet religious from *comunidades insertas* at various locations throughout Latin America: Bogotá (Colombia), Petrópolis (Brazil) and Montevideo (Uruguay).

212 C. Palmés, "La CLAR: Un signo de esperanza en el horizonte de América Latina [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," *Boletín CLAR* 13 4 (abril-mayo 1975) 4. L. Patiño, "Informe del secretariado general [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," p. 13. Idem, "Informe del secretariado general Documento 4," in *VI Asamblea General de la CLAR: Caracas febrero 8-15 1976*, mimeo p. 9. The appointment of the CLAR team of theologians occurs every three years after the General Assembly. Its most prominent members from 1974 until 1979 are: C. Palmés (Bolivia), R. Antoncich (Peru), L. Boff (Brazil), V. Moreira da Silva (Brazil), R. Muñoz (Chile), A. Restrepo (Colombia), E. Delaney (Argentina), L. Ojeda (Peru). C. Maccise (Mexico) and N. Bermúdez (Venezuela) are members from 1976 until 1979. A. Alonso (Venezuela) participates on the team until 1976.

213 CLAR, "Plan Global de la CLAR 1976," *Boletín CLAR* 14 2 (febrero-marzo 1976) 17.

5 Towards the world of the poor

5.0 Introduction

After 1974, dependency is accepted by CLAR for scientific, ethical and theological reasons.²¹⁴ Scientifically, dependency is judged the sociological theory which best explains the observable facts in the Latin American context. Ethically, dependency is viewed as a perspective which can best guide action for the construction of a more just society. Theologically, the dependency analysis allows a proper discernment of the socio-cultural reality and the *signs of the times* showing how religious should live in the context of Latin America.²¹⁵

Dependency remains the mainstay of CLAR's analysis of the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality. This does not change with increased repression brought by the National Security regimes because these are, in fact, viewed not as contradicting dependency but as more violent and repressive consequence of it.²¹⁶

There are, as earlier seen, different versions of the dependency theory yet CLAR adopts one which denies that the reform of existing social structures is possible. Latin America is viewed as needing liberation and new social structures.²¹⁷

5.1 Dependency as a chosen perspective

Acceptance of the dependency perspective drives CLAR to look at the present social structures as well as Latin America's past history. Through reflections on the

214 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa en América Latina. Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 20 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1976): 30-34. Idem, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 18-21. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa en América Latina," in *Hacia el futuro de la vida religiosa en América*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 35 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 12-22. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 20.

215 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 34-41, 54-57.

216 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana de vida religiosa*, Colección CLAR 42 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1979): 23-31. While *Experiencia latinoamericana* is approved after Puebla (Santo Domingo, March 6-16, 1979), it was written before the Bishops' Conference. Interestingly, several references to Puebla are added in *Experiencia latinoamericana* but only in the discussion of the Latin American social reality.

217 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 1-5. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 37-41. Idem, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 30-34.

functioning of social structures and the dominant ideology, religious discover that any liberation movement faces strong opposition. Likewise, a review of Latin American history shows that dependency's roots can be found in the colonial Spanish and Portuguese systems.

Yet reflections on the dependent social structures and history are neither the only nor CLAR's prime focus. Instead, CLAR and Latin American religious discover that the poor are, in fact, a different world. It is this world of the poor which becomes central in CLAR's reflections on religious life and its connection with evangelization.²¹⁸

The past roots of dependency

CLAR looks to Latin America's past in order to better understand the international system of dependency. In so doing it discovers that the present social structures of dependency are rooted in the colonial history of Latin America.

CLAR interprets Latin America's history in terms of conflict and struggle, which began at the birth of the continent. When European settlers arrived conflict developed between them and the indigenous peoples. This conflict was not solely the result of cultural differences, but a clash of rival historical projects. The Europeans advanced a colonial project which sought the subjugation and oppression of the indigenous Indian peoples. Opposed to this colonial project was the historical project of the Indians, who strove to retain their freedom and culture. In the clash the Europeans, having superior weapons, overpowered the Indians and imposed a social order which resulted in the exploitation of the Indians economically, culturally and politically.

For CLAR, this is not solely a past and forgotten conflict but rather one that continues. The current historical project of the poor for liberation is a continuation of the Indian's. Similarly, the historical project of the Latin American social elite is the colonial project.²¹⁹

Not only does Latin American history reveal two rival historical projects but it also shatters the myth that Latin America has one unified history. Since the initial European invasion, Latin American has had, in fact, two parallel and rival histories. One has the official recognition as history and is a retelling of the past from the colonialist's viewpoint. Alongside this official history is the story of the poor, largely ignored and unwritten, which reflects their struggles through the centuries for freedom.²²⁰

218 Cf. p. 23-24.

219 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 26-33. Cf. p. 54.

220 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 26-31. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 18-20.

The present challenge of dependency

Prior to 1974 some religious saw the international dependency as affecting the socio-political and cultural structures within Latin America. After 1974, CLAR discussions display an interest in how these structures function.

Clodovis Boff and Frei Betto address this issue, stressing the importance of social structures and the dominant ideology which protects them from change. For Boff and Frei Betto, some social structures are apparent and visible in daily life, such as those which regulate economic, social and political transactions. Yet other social structures are invisible, internalized within each person, and involve the acceptance of a dominant ideology, which provides norms, values and ways of interpreting reality.

The dominant ideology is seen as critically important because it offers a partial and selective view of reality, one that preserves the *status quo*. The dominant ideology does this by legitimating the existing social order as normal and just, providing individuals with a view of reality which blocks out all that could be challenging. In the face of a reality of oppression, the dominant ideology masks this situation and this is done for the benefit and protection of the social elite, the dominant class, who benefits from the *status quo*.

Yet the gravest consequence of social structure and the dominant ideology is their ability to distort human relationships. By the legitimation of oppression, people are taught that the poor or other discriminated social groups are in actuality sub-human and do not deserve equal respect.²²¹

For Noé Zevallos, the social reality is also masked in another more subtle manner. As the dominant ideology justifies the *status quo*, so a social structure's underlying epistemological structure tries to demonstrate the rationality of the *status quo*. Through presenting a distorted image of the human person and knowledge, the epistemological structure justifies oppression through making domination its central reference point. As a result, knowledge becomes not a means to freedom but a power for the control and domination of others. In this way, the domination and oppression of a minority in the society is presented as reasonable and natural.²²²

The world of the poor

Latin America is seen as having two rival histories, which are in a conflict that is camouflaged by the dominant ideology. Yet within this reality of conflict,

221 C. Boff, "Pecado social: Dimensión social del pecado," in *Pecado social y conversión estructural*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 40 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1978): 30-32. Frei Betto, "Exigencias de la conversión cristiana," *Pecado social y conversión estructural*, p. 42-44. N. Zevallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, Colección Perspectivas 7 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 73-82. "Junta Directiva de la CLAR 1970-1973," *Boletín CLAR* 8:1-2 (enero-febrero 1970): 16; (Noé Zevallos was a CLAR vice president from 1969 until 1973). IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 25-33, 141.

222 N. Zevallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 46-54, 77, 111.

religious see that they have to make a choice. They can choose either the life and history of the social elite or of the poor:

"The last decade has opened us to history; invited us as religious to a responsibility before it. But it is a question of which history?"²²³

The choice, for CLAR, is clear, namely religious should enter into the life and history of the poor. Yet religious discover that not only do the poor have a unique history but are a different world. The lifestyle, values and perspective of the poor are radically different from the social elites, though the dominant ideology judges this difference as deficiency, the poor are seen as mere imitators of the dominant culture. The 1979 CLAR General Assembly rejects this view that the poor are solely imitators and an incomplete reflection of the dominant culture. Instead, the poor are another world ("otro mundo") that is an anthropological reality ("una realidad antropológica") which cannot be judged by the dominant culture's standards.²²⁴ How is the world of the poor understood by CLAR and the Latin American religious? This world is first of all understood in relation to the structures of dependency. The poor are a product of the social structures, fashioned by dependency, which place greater value on material possessions than human beings. These social structures deprive the poor of *tener* (possessions), *poder* (power), and *saber* (knowledge). The poor are prevented from obtaining material goods necessary for a dignified life; they are excluded from participation in socio-political decision making, rendering them powerless; and they are denied an opportunity for education or the enjoyment of culture.²²⁵

Dependent social structures not only deprive the poor of certain material and social goods but also threaten their very identity. A people's identity is seen as always linked to a community. But as a result of social changes, brought by dependency, the poor's capacity to form community is increasingly weakened. Identity is also viewed as linked to religiosity but here again a threat appears. Through relocation to the cities, the poor are increasingly exposed to secularism, which challenges their traditional religiosity.²²⁶

The ability of the poor to form community is also deliberately blocked by political manipulation. Governments use repression to crush community formation in order to prevent the poor from developing a political force which could threaten the established order. Deprived of community and traditional religiosity, the poor are

223 R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 18; ("La última década nos ha abierto a la historia; nos invita a asumir, como religiosos, una responsabilidad ante ella. Pero de qué historia se trata?").

224 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 62.

225 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 19-20. N. Zevallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 113-115.

226 S. Galilea, *Pastoral popular y urbana en América Latina*, Colección CLAR 36 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 24-25, 30-31. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 22-23.

losing their identity and becoming a mass, lacking awareness over their reality and a sense of solidarity with others.²²⁷

In spite of these challenges, the poor are viewed as offering hope for Latin America. They are again seen, as earlier in *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*, as possessing values which can be the basis for a different Latin American society.²²⁸

5.2 Deciphering the social reality

Since the dominant ideology obscures a clear view of the Latin American reality, religious see the need to decipher reality. They discover various ways in which they can pierce through the distorted image of reality which the dominant ideology perpetuates.

Theory-praxis

Praxis is one way in which religious can obtain an undistorted picture of the Latin American socio-political reality. While praxis is generally seen as a dialectic relationship between theory and action in a specific historical context, it has a variety of understandings in CLAR discussions.²²⁹ The most common understanding is that praxis is a reflection on action which allows for a new vision of the social reality and leads to a re-interpretation of theology.

J.B. Libânio briefly mentions how praxis can allow for a new vision of reality and a reformulation of theology. An example of such a theological reformulation arose during World War II when Protestants and Catholics co-operated against the Nazis. Seeing the need for common resistance against the Nazis, Catholics and

227 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 18-22. Idem, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 51-53. *Pueblo de Dios* states that the 'mass person' is without a common history or goals which bind him/her to others. M. Agudelo, "Experiencia nueva de vida comunitaria," *CONFER* (1978): 543-560. J. Comblin, "O conceito de comunidade e a teologia (II)," *REB* (1970). 568-579. Comblin contrasts community and the 'mass', and is influenced by the French sociologist, G. Gurvich.

228 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 19-24. Idem, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 28-29. N. Zevallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 83-85, 100-106. E. Delaney, *Camino de la vida religiosa en América Latina*, Colección CLAR 31 (Bogotá. Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 54-55.

229 There are different understandings of praxis and its importance. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 35, 141, 146. Praxis is described as the concrete expression of an ideology, which gives not only an interpretative framework for understanding reality but also a vision of an ideal world. Frei Betto, "Exigencias de la conversión cristiana," p. 43-44. Praxis is seen as not always free, because the dominant ideology encourages a praxis which is non-critical and maintains the *status quo*. Thus rejection of the dominant ideology is a prerequisite for a free praxis. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa. Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 33. It is stated that theology needs to be evaluated by the praxis which flows from it. J. Marins, "Desafío a la misión evangelizadora," p. 86-92. Praxis is seen as able to re-shape institutions. Through a different way of acting, new insights and relationships develop which can lead to a new model of Church.

Protestants set aside the theological differences which separated them. As a result a new vision of reality arose, in which Catholics and Protestants were able to recognize their mutual experience of suffering and persecution. With the war's end, theologians reflect on this common wartime experience and re-interpret past theological views, giving an impulse to a growing ecumenical movement. Libânio sees an analogous situation occurring in Latin America where Protestants and Catholics jointly work for the change of social structures.²³⁰

Praxis is given a more detailed treatment in *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*.²³¹ In this important CLAR study, praxis is described as a dialectical and dynamic relationship between theory and action. Through reflection, theory and action mutually influence and change each other.

Praxis allows religious to discover a new view of the social reality which allows a re-interpretation of the Gospels. Religious initially decide to live and work among the poor out of fidelity to the Gospel. Through sharing the poor's life and struggle, religious learn that Latin America is far different than they had previously imagined. They see the massive poverty, oppression and personally experience the conflictive nature of the poor's reality. In the light of this experience of social conflict, religious re-interpret the Bible and theology, finding different theological perspectives which in turn motivate new forms of actions in support of the poor's liberation.

Yet this re-interpretation from praxis is not magical. Rather it flows from a choice because underlying all action by Christians is a sociological vision of reality as well as an interpretation of Jesus' life. Both of these involves a choice among many possibilities. Praxis allows religious to explicitly see this connection and make a deliberate choice for a new vision of society and theology.²³²

The importance of social location

The dominant ideology's power to persuade is seen as related to social location. Among the rich and powerful, a person is far from the poor and their suffering, and this distance makes it easier to accept the socio-political and cultural reality as normal and just. Yet, among the poor, who live on the margin of the society, the entire reality of Latin America appears different. While they too can be manipulated by the dominant ideology, its power to legitimate and rationalize the *status quo* is weakened in the face of daily life, filled with oppression and massive poverty. The poor see Latin America with eyes that challenge the ideology's power to clothe reality under a veil of normalcy.

230 J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 19 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1971; repr., Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1976): 73-75 (page references to reprint edition).

231 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, 4, 7. J.B. Libânio, E. Hoornaert and C. Boff also contribute to this study.

232 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 18-21, 35-41.

Religious who live among the poor and actively support their liberation discover this difference. They see how different the poor see reality and this challenges religious to re-evaluate their former view, leading to a recognition of the conflict in Latin American society. This recognition, flowing from experience, leads to different forms of action by religious in support for the poor.²³³ Thus through experience religious find the social location of the poor as the place where the clearest view of the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality can be obtained.²³⁴

The social location of the poor not only challenges the power of the dominant ideology but also its accompanying epistemology of domination. Among the poor, religious have to make an epistemological shift away from a focus on domination because the poor are powerless. Instead of domination, the poor teach religious their epistemological categories which value the human person, reflecting their traditional wisdom.²³⁵

Philosophy

For Noé Zavallos, another way to pierce the web of dominant ideology is through a critical philosophy, which can fulfill many functions. Philosophy can first of all challenge the explanations offered by dominant ideology. Through analysis, philosophy can demonstrate that the existing social structure is not immutable but a human creation. By critical reflection, the poor discover that they are not passive victims of fate but active agents in history with a power to change unjust social structures. Finally, philosophy offers the tools which allow the poor to critically review and systematize their values, as an alternative to the existing social structures.²³⁶

Although Zavallos stresses philosophy's ability to counter the dominant ideology, he does not explicitly mention any specific philosophy. *Información teológica y pastoral* briefly touches this topic in a discussion of Marxism. There is, first of all, a rejection of a stalinist interpretation of Marxism which declares that socialism can develop only on the model of Russia. Next there is denial of the historical

233 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 18-20

234 B. González Buelta, "Contemplación desde la historia," *Boletín CLAR* 14 6 (junio 1975, reprinted in *El Dios oprimido. Hacia una espiritualidad de la inserción* [Santander: Sal Terrae, 1989]) 1-7. R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, Colección CLAR 39 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1978) 14-15, 97, 122-123. Antoncich cites an article by Jon Sobrino, "Religious Life in the Third World," chap. in *The True Church and the Poor* (Panama: *Diakonia*, 1977, repr., Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984) 302-337 (page references are to reprint edition). This article, telling religious to go to the 'periphery, frontier, and deserts', is often referred to in later discussions about the *comunidades insertas*. Interestingly, this phrase appears in the 1994 Bishops Synod Work Document II. 10

235 N. Zavallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 105, 110-112. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 59.

236 N. Zavallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 73-85, 111. This, of course, fits the role of Gramsci's organic intellectual, whose task is the development of the oppressed's critical awareness and to systemize their popular wisdom.

materialistic elements of Marxism, which posit a deterministic relationship between the human person and social structures. Instead, *Información teológica y pastoral* describes the relationship in terms of a dialectic in which the person is both shaped by social structures and also has the power to change them.

Información teológica y pastoral's concern with Marxism is not theoretical but flows from the context of Latin America. Through contacts between Christians and Marxists in liberation movements, some religious question if it is possible for a Christian to be a Marxist. To this question, no definite answer is given and it is seen as dependent on whether Marxist materialistic philosophy is separable from its scientific dimensions.²³⁷

Social analysis

Social analysis provides another means to de-cipher the Latin American reality. Through the use of social analysis, religious can scientifically identify the causes behind poverty and oppression.²³⁸

Within CLAR there is also some discussion about Marxist social analysis.²³⁹ An initial mention is found in *Dimensión política de la vida religiosa*, where Marxist analysis is described as offering a scientific view of the socio-political and cultural reality. The use of Marxism as a scientific tool is seen as separable from its materialistic philosophy:

"With a language taken from other ideologies one is able to express Christian concepts; and the discoveries of science are valid regardless of their origin. Likewise a language which appears to be Christian can, on occasions, conceal or support ideologies or behavior which is egoistical, anti-evangelical and materialistic."²⁴⁰

The issue of Marxist social analysis does not receive much direct discussion in CLAR. There are later vague references that religious need to use social analysis but no mention of Marxist social analysis.²⁴¹ The issue is too controversial for dis-

237 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p 30-33.

238 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p 54-57.

239 A. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989): 120-125, 156-164. In CLAR discussions Marxist social analysis is never given a clear definition which McGovern says is a common occurrence among liberation theologians. According to McGovern by Marxist social analysis is generally meant the acceptance of some form of historical materialism, Marx's views of capitalism, and sometimes Lenin's theory of imperialism.

240 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p 17; ("Con un lenguaje tomado de otras ideologías se puede expresar una concepción de fondo cristiana; y los hallazgos de carácter científico son válidos cualquiera sea su origen. De la misma manera, un lenguaje aparentemente cristiano puede, en ocasiones, encubrir o acompañar ideologías o comportamientos egoístas, anti-evangélicos, materialistas").

241 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p 30, 143. C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, Colección CLAR 38 (Bogotá. Indo-American Press Service, 1978) 57. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa en América Latina a partir de Medellín*, p 12. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 16. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa

cussion²⁴² but nonetheless remains a concern. In 1978 the CLAR theological team objects to the Puebla Work Document's rejection of Marxist social analysis. The CLAR theological team pleads for an open mind, stating that a separation between Marxist philosophy and its scientific uses should not be excluded.²⁴³

5.3 Theological interpretation of the Latin American social reality

In CLAR discussions, the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality is interpreted theologically in a variety of ways. In spite of this variety, two things are eminently clear: that the existing socio-cultural reality is a violation of the poor's rights, and that Christianity has been distorted through past legitimization of existing social structures.

For some religious the social structures of dependency are idolatrous. In the functioning of these structures, which stress self-sufficiency, there is a denial that God is necessary. Idolatry is also evident through the importance which the social structures give to material possessions and money, making these idols.²⁴⁴

The present reality is once more judged as a violation of the poor's rights for community, in society and in the Church as the People of God.²⁴⁵ But this violation of the poor's rights is seen as going further. In the present reality of Latin America, their basic human rights are trampled upon. Ricardo Antoncich sees this violation of the poor's human rights as a serious theological issue, but one that is often murky and vague. This vagueness is the result of differing understandings on what constitute human rights, differences which flow from conflicting ideologies. For the capitalist West, human rights are seen in individualistic terms and revolve around the right of free expression. In contrast to this is the Communist view that there can be no human rights without a recognition of economic rights, the right to a basic level of life. For Antoncich, both positions alone are insufficient. Rather, he roots the concept of human rights in the Incarnation of Jesus, which revealed the dignity and the rights of all for political freedom as well as material goods. For Antoncich, this understanding of human rights produces an

en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla,” *Boletín CLAR* 16: 9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1978): 2. As published the last mentioned article does not clearly mention that it is the work of the CLAR theological team. But confirmation of their authorship appears in: C. Palmés, “Informe de la presidencia y secretariado [VII Asamblea General, Santo Domingo],” p. 5.

242 Secretariado general de la CLAR, “Dimensión política... Resultado de la consulta a la jerarquía,” p. 4, 17-18, 23, 32-33, 41. Marxist social analysis encounters strong disapproval from SCRIS, CELAM, and the bishops' conferences from Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela.

243 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, “CLAR analiza documento de Puebla,” p. 918.

244 N. Zevallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 19-20. R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 64-66.

245 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 57-59; (LG 8 is cited as demonstrating the inseparability of the Church's worship of God and its role as community of believers).

ironic commentary on the Latin American reality. The National Security governments, which claim to be defending Christianity, are, in fact, through their violation of the poor's rights denying this revelation of the Incarnation.²⁴⁶

The CLAR team of theologians sees the legitimation of the *status quo* by the Church as a serious issue. The social elite has used the name of God and Christianity in order to legitimate an oppressive *status quo*. As a consequence, the poor often see the Church as allied with those who oppress them.²⁴⁷

This legitimation also has repercussions on theology. Through accepting an unjust reality and the dominant ideology, basic concepts of Christianity are lost. The God of Bible is no longer recognized as the supporter and defender of the poor, but as a protector of the existing social order. Jesus ceases to be materially poor with a mission focussed on the Kingdom but is transformed into a preacher of spiritual values. The result is a serious distortion in the biblical images of God and Jesus, central to Christianity.²⁴⁸

The socio-cultural reality also masks structural sin. While the root of sin is always in personal choice, sin is incarnated in social structures, which reflect and transmit the choices of a society. Structural sin blinds a person to evil, preventing a clear vision of how to act in relation to God or other people. While a person may not be aware of his/her participation in structural sin that is no excuse because modern social science offers analytical tools which allow its detection.²⁴⁹

The CLAR theologians see two consequences flowing from this understanding of social sin. First, conversion cannot be seen as merely an individualistic and interior but demands a change to values and actions which support the project of God, namely liberation of the poor.²⁵⁰ A second consequence is that human freedom is viewed as contextual. The recognition of social sin does not deny the existence of human freedom but rather says that it is never abstract. Human freedom is linked to a concrete socio-cultural context, which defines and limits it. This acceptance of freedom's contextuality is seen as recovering a forgotten dimension of human freedom. Social structures shape how people understand freedom and are also products of human action. This realization allows people to

246 R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 55-58, 92-96. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 33-34.

247 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 55-56.

248 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 41-50. R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 52-60. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 42-50. Frei Betto, "Exigencias de conversión cristiana," p. 44-45. Equipo Teólogos de la CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 906-907.

249 C. Boff, "Pecado social: Dimensión social de pecado," p. 24-34.

250 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 907, 914. Frei Betto, "Exigencias de la conversión cristiana," p. 42-49; (Christian conversion is seen as demanding an ideological shift to the poor). J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 34.

re-discover their power and freedom to shape and recreate social structures in order to make them more just.²⁵¹

Eschatology is again used to critique the current social reality. As previously seen, there is: a focus on the historical presence of the Kingdom; the need that Christian salvation be seen as integral with a social dimension; and the connection between the Kingdom and the liberation of the poor.²⁵²

A new aspect to the discussion of eschatology is the introduction of the term 'utopia'.²⁵³ *Información teológica y pastoral*, defines utopia as a vision of an alternative society which flows from an ideology; a goal which guides actions by individuals and groups, seeking social change.²⁵⁴

For Christians the Kingdom is a Utopia, which must motivate life and action. The reason for this is christological, the need by all Christians to follow Jesus who revealed the Kingdom as a vision of a new society, based upon justice, peace and love. The Kingdom was not just a future goal but something which Jesus worked to establish in history. For this reason, Christians have a responsibility to further the construction of the Kingdom through their life and actions.

While the Utopia of the Kingdom should guide Christians, their actions need to be historically relevant. The construction of the Kingdom continues within history through actions which advance justice, peace and love in a specific socio-cultural context. In Latin America, the partial presence of the Utopia is seen among the poor and their liberation struggle which demands the support of religious who wish to further the Kingdom's growth.

The Utopia of the Kingdom not only offers an alternative to the *status quo* but also a critique of existing social structures. By judging these in the light of God's plan the present socio-political and cultural reality can be evaluated.²⁵⁵

Finally, the CLAR theologians give special theological importance to the poor. Reviewing the Old Testament and Church history, CLAR discovers that renewal and movements of change within the Church arise from the margins of society. From

251 R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 75-83. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 16. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 907.

252 R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 54-55. Equipo Teólogos de la CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. vi. Idem, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 916. Idem, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 32. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 47-50.

253 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 4; (OA 37 is cited where Pope Paul mentions the rising interest in utopian thinking as challenge to social injustice).

254 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 149.

255 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 40, 72, 91-92. Idem, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 104. CLAR, *El religioso educador*, Colección CLAR 23 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1975): 53. N. Zevallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 110-112. CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 4.

among the poor, new perspectives surface which challenge existing views and offer hope for all.²⁵⁶

The poor are also theologically important for christological reasons. Through deliberate choice, God was born into a poor Jewish family, choosing to become not just human but also poor. This shows the importance of the poor's perspective on reality, for Jesus saw reality from that viewpoint. This choice by God is seen to require that religious also adopt the perspective of the poor.

Jesus' Incarnation also is seen as revealing a similarity with twentieth century Latin America. Palestine in the first century was a colony of Rome, bound economically, socially, culturally and politically by dependency structures. This is the very same reality which Latin America confronts, namely international structures of dependency. This highlights the dignity of the poor, with whom Jesus lived in a situation similar to Latin America.²⁵⁷

The Incarnation of Jesus highlights God's preference for the poor. In His life and actions, Jesus showed a favoritism for the poor and through His actions Jesus confronted injustice in order to establish the Kingdom.²⁵⁸

The poor are furthermore seen as a sacrament of God in the world. They are a living witness to the injustice in human societies, a tangible proof of the inequity in the current reality. While the dominant ideology proclaims that all is well and that the social order is just, the poor manifest the hypocrisy of such claims.²⁵⁹

Finally, the poor are a symbol revealing Christ. But the Christ revealed amongst the poor is different than as portrayed by the dominant ideology. He is not a supporter of the established social order. Nor does Christ, revealed from the poor, use power to dominate others. Instead, the poor reveal to the world the crucified Christ and His continuing suffering among them.²⁶⁰

256 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 80-91. Idem, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 35-58.

257 J. Gómez, "Jesus evangelizador," in *Evangelización en América Latina en torno a Puebla*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 37 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1978): 14-15. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 60-61.

258 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 11, 19. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 17. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 54-55, 82-83.

259 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 914. L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 89.

260 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 911. R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 98-99.

6 Religious identity in the world of the poor

6.0 Introduction

CLAR accepted the dependency perspective as the most adequate for the interpretation of the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality. With this acceptance, CLAR looked to the history of Latin America as well as the present in order to more fully understanding the workings of the social structures, fashioned by dependency. Within Latin America's past, CLAR found the roots of the current social structures and two rival historical projects whose conflictive relationship continued. Looking at the present, CLAR saw sin rooted in social structures and a dominant ideology which distorted reality. Various ways were seen to break through the dominant ideology in order to get an unclouded vision of the Latin American reality: praxis among the poor, critical philosophy, social analysis, and a new social location.

But CLAR's central concern was the world of the poor, which was the product of exploitative social structures and at the same time a source of hope for a better future.

The poor were also viewed as having a special theological importance, as a symbol of Christ's suffering, a concrete sign of social injustice and because of Christ's choice to be born and live as a poor man.

Chapter 6 continues CLAR's focus on the world of the poor and sees it as a favored location for the discovery of religious life identity. Building upon the key elements of *La vida según el Espíritu*, Latin American religious conclude that an authentically Latin America identity for religious life can only be found among the poor.

6.1 Authentically Latin American and religious

Concerns about the authenticity in religious life were expressed earlier in *Pobreza y vida religiosa*.²⁶¹ These concerns continue, as Latin American religious ever more fully realize their alienation from the people and important values of their own religious life.

261 Cf. p. 56-57.

Through increased contact with the poor, religious see their separation from the poor not only geographically and pastorally but also alienated culturally and spiritually. As religious review their training and education, they see that formation programs in most congregations have conveyed ways of life and thinking which are alien to Latin America. Likewise, religious also discover that their congregation's spiritualities separate them from the people. The religious congregations which work in Latin America are almost all of West European origin and transmit to their members a form of spirituality which is alien to the poor's religiosity.²⁶²

President Carlos Palmés discusses this cultural and spiritual alienation of religious from the Latin American people at the 1974 CLAR General Board Meeting (San José, Costa Rica). For him, religious life needs adaptation to the context of Latin America but one barrier to this is a view of religious life which stresses its need for uniformity. Before the Second Vatican Council, all members of a religious congregation were expected to have identical formation programs, spiritual practices and a fixed daily horarium. This uniformity applied to all, regardless of cultural or ethnic background and while some modifications were allowable (especially for missionaries), religious life was not understood as needing to fashion a relationship to a specific culture. Instead it was seen as needing to follow established and uniform ways of life.²⁶³ But this tendency towards uniformity is a problem and, for Palmés, Latin America needs:

"not to transplant from Europe or the modern and industrialized regions of America – disciplines, rules, ways of life and norms that are opposed to the Latin American way."²⁶⁴

Yet it is not only through contact with the poor that religious discover their alienation and need for a more Latin American form of religious life. Religious also review the history of religious life and find that, far from being uniform, it has grown in relationship to specific historical and cultural contexts. Throughout history radically diverse forms of religious life have developed in response to new historical needs and as a subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) critique of existing religious life. The anchorites (hermits) were overshadowed by the cenobites (monks) who in turn were later challenged by the mendicants whose laxity three hundred years later led to the regular priests. Each form of religious life had a clear relationship with history, addressing new challenges facing society and the Church. Further, religious congregations in their spiritualities, lifestyles and works reflect the needs and socio-cultural conditions of different periods in history.²⁶⁵

262 R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 14-15, 26-28.

263 C. Palmés, "Una vida religiosa más autentica [XIII Junta Directiva, Costa Rica]," *Boletín CLAR* 12:2 (febrero 1974): 3.

264 C. Palmés and M. Agudelo, "El religioso del futuro esta naciendo en América Latina," interview, *Boletín CLAR* 12:3 (marzo 1974): 4.

265 E. Cardenas, *Vida religiosa y situaciones históricas*, Colección CLAR 15 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1974): 15-31. Cardenas is strongly influenced by R. Hostie, *Leven*

Reflection on the general history of religious life leads to consideration of its past in Latin America. From the very first voyages of discovery, religious were present and active in Latin America, mostly cooperating and supporting the Spanish and Portuguese colonial ambitions. Religious life has a long history in Latin America but one which was linked to the colonial project against the poor.

Thus the present alienation of religious from the Latin American people can be traced back to its initial presence on the continent. Religious had formed an alliance with the colonial oppressors against the poor Indians. For CLAR, this alliance is seen as continuing through Latin America's history to the present, linking religious life to the social elites.

This alliance between religious life and the social elites is viewed as having grave consequences upon religious life. Through the unquestioning acceptance of the *status quo* religious' ability to prophetically witness the Kingdom is weakened both in Latin American society and within the Church. The alliance has also affected the internal structures of religious congregations. Within communities, internal life structures are hierarchical and bear an uncomfortable similarity to Latin American social structures, hierarchically ordered to stress order and obedience to law.²⁶⁶

Thus the earlier perceived concerns for authenticity in religious life receive a new shape. Religious life can only be authentically Latin American if it overcomes the alienation between itself and the people. But to overcome this alienation demands more than the inculturation of religious life into Latin America. Inculturation, certainly necessary, alone is insufficient because dependency has affected all social and cultural structures, denying the poor an identity. Therefore in their search for authenticity, religious have to not only inculturate themselves but also join poor's search for a new identity. Through this search religious life's spiritual and cultural alienation can be overcome and an authentic Latin American form of religious life emerge.²⁶⁷

There is a second way in which Latin American religious are unauthentic and alienated. Religious find themselves alienated from not just the Latin American people but also many values essential to religious life. Latin American religious,

en dood van de religieuze instituten, Emmaus (Utrecht). Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 47-57.

266 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 60. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 26-31. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 12-22. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 101.

267 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 24-27. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 24-27, 75-76. E. Delaney, "Nuevas perspectivas de la vida religiosa en América Latina," in *Nuevas perspectivas de la vida religiosa en América*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 21 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1975): 143-152. L. Boff, "Vida religiosa en el contexto de América Latina: Desafío y oportunidad," in *Nuevas perspectivas de la vida religiosa en América*, p. 115-127, esp. 115-116.

motivated by the Council's call for renewal, discover that their present community structures are outdated and fail to encourage authentic community among religious. One cause of this failure in religious life community structures is seen as due to a loss of certain essential values for religious life: hospitality, openness, equality, and free communication.²⁶⁸

However, the loss of authenticity in religious life is not unique to the context of Latin America. On the contrary, again reviewing history, Latin American religious discover that this has been an ongoing problem for religious. Throughout religious life's 1600 year history, periods of growth and decline are clearly identifiable. Religious congregations are born, develop and in many cases die. Though there are many reasons for the death of religious congregations, one is primary, namely inflexibility to adapt and respond to new historical challenges.²⁶⁹

This lack of flexibility is an inherent danger in the development of religious congregations. Beginning as small communities, religious congregations grow, develop and institutionalize the original insights of the founder/ess. This institutionalization is natural and, in fact, essential for the preservation and transmission of the early founder's charism. While necessary, this institutionalization always results in a diminution in the fervor and power of the original community. This institutionalization increases over time and can result in the loss of essential values and insights from the founder's charism, leading to rigid internal community life routines and structures.²⁷⁰

In losing essential values through the institutionalization of the founder/ess' charism, religious life also is less able to witness the Kingdom in society. Through institutionalization, religious often forget that their lifestyle and community structures should be an eschatological witness which challenges society. Instead, religious identify themselves more with the preservation of the existing social order than challenging it.²⁷¹

Yet the loss of values in religious life is not always the fault of congregations. Sometimes bishops and the hierarchy have intervened in religious life, imposing ways of life which are alien to the founder/ess' original intentions. This was especially true after the Council of Trent, when religious life underwent a process of standardization imposed by the hierarchy. Bishops and the popes molded religious congregations in order to address ecclesial needs, imposing regulations and lifestyles which often clashed with a congregation's original charism. As a

268 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 27-28. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 24-25.

269 E. Cardenas, *Vida religiosa y situaciones históricas*, esp. p. 35-80. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 49-57.

270 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 68-69. This concern over the institutionalization of the charism reflects the thinking of Max Weber in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations* (New York: Free Press, 1964).

271 C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 19-20.

result many religious congregations lost essential values and religious life became clericalized.²⁷²

Although religious life is seen as alienated from Latin America and many of its own essential values, hope exists which historically grounded and visible in the practice of some Latin American religious. Once again CLAR turns to the history of religious life. In the past when religious life faced periods of crisis and spiritual decline, the Spirit called men and women to lead movements of renewal, which were always prophetic, challenging existing forms of religious life as well as responding to some unaddressed historical needs. St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius are two examples, both having begun movements which led to the renewal of religious life.²⁷³

CLAR sees the increasing numbers of religious who form small communities and work among the poor as a visible sign of hope in Latin America. In small communities, religious are seen as slowly reconnecting themselves to Latin American culture and participating with the poor in a search for a new identity, untouched by dependent social structures.²⁷⁴

The search for authenticity in religious life remains a concern within CLAR until Puebla. The General Plan from the 1976 General Assembly mentions it as one of the key goals of CLAR.²⁷⁵ Furthermore the 1979 General Assembly, relying on the experience of the small communities, states that the poor are a new component for religious life renewal. For among the poor, religious are seen as able to discover Latin America's culture, work for liberation and find a new identity. Also among the poor religious learn values which can restore religious life to its original fervor, freeing it from the domestication brought by institutionalization.²⁷⁶

6.2 Experience of God among the poor

La vida según el Espíritu portrayed the experience of God as the basis for religious life. After 1974 the importance of the experience of God for religious life is highlighted and related to the Latin American context of social conflict. Based upon the experience of religious and theological reflection, CLAR concludes that the experience of God in Latin America can be found among the poor.

272 J. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 98-101. C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 16-32, 63-64. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 49-57, esp. 54-55.

273 E. Cardenas, *Vida religiosa y situaciones históricas*, 21-22, 28-29, 49-70. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 49-57.

274 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 81-83. Idem, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 24-25, 50.

275 CLAR, "Plan Global de la CLAR 1976," p. 17.

276 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 67-73.

At the 1974 Congress of the Guatemala Conference of Religious, Sister Juana Vásquez Arcón briefly describes her contact with poor campesinos and their experience of God. According to Sister Arcón, the campesinos experience God not as separate from their daily life but as a part of it. They see God as the only source of hope in their daily life of poverty and oppression. Also striking for Sister Arcón is that the poor mostly experience God through their forms of popular religiosity rather than official Church prayers or liturgies.

This experience among the poor, reminds Sister Arcón of her youth when she also had experienced God through various forms of popular religion. She had abandoned this early contact with popular religiosity upon entering religious life but its memory challenges her to face the contrast between officially acceptable Church practices and the poor's religiosity.

The poor's experience of God as an intimate part of life is seen, for Sister Arcón, as presenting a challenge for religious life. Religious communities seek to base their life on the experience of God and in Latin America this challenges religious to do so through the poor.²⁷⁷

Leonardo Boff discusses the experience of God, which he sets in the social context of Latin America and reaches the same conclusion as Sister Arcón. Boff begins by stating that God is never experienced apart from history and social reality. While God is transcendent and beyond time, people are not and can only experience God within the limits and possibilities offered by a specific socio-cultural context. For it is only through the categories and ways of thinking from a specific socio-cultural context that a person can interpret and recognize as valid an experience of God.²⁷⁸

Because the interpretation of any experience of God is linked to a socio-cultural context, a society's image of God is important. The image which a people have of God not only describes Him/Her but also where S/He can be experienced in the world. Yet all images are incomplete and partial because God's fullness can never be so reduced. But in this incompleteness and partiality lies a danger, namely that the image of God can be manipulated for the legitimization of social injustice.²⁷⁹

Boff then analyzes how God is viewed and experienced in three different contexts: the secular world, within the general Latin American society and among the poor. In the secularized world, God is unrecognized and described as absent. Relying on science and technology, God is treated as an object for analysis, not as a person. Within the secularized world there is no desire to experience a living God; therefore God, while present, is unrecognized and remains silent. S/He refuses to be only an object for analysis.²⁸⁰

277 J.V. Arcón, "La experiencia de Dios," *Boletín CLAR* 12:1 (enero 1974): 7-8.

278 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 20-23.

279 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 12-17.

280 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 29-40.

Within general Latin America society the image of God is distorted, leading to His/Her absence. In Latin America God has been used to justify and legitimate the existing social reality of injustice: "the image of God is tied ideologically to the system which justifies the situation."²⁸¹ In this situation the God of the Bible is no longer recognizable and worse yet is absent in two ways. First, God is absent from the socio-cultural reality because of the oppression of the poor, caused by dependency. Second, God is absent to some Christians and often to the official Church, who while claiming faith support an oppressive *status quo*. In so doing the image of God is turned into an idol, since the God of the Bible never justifies oppression.²⁸²

Yet in Latin America, God can be experienced in an unexpected place, namely among the poor. In the world of the poor, dominated by misery, poverty and violence, God is present, experienced as love and the Giver of hope to those who seek justice and liberation from unjust social structures. This is the God of the Bible.²⁸³

Boff sees the experience of God among the poor as an authentic encounter based upon the example of Jesus and here he makes an important shift from *La vida según el Espíritu*. While *La vida según el Espíritu* says that Christians experience God through Christ, Boff states that the experience of the historical Jesus is the criterion judging any experience of God. For Boff, Jesus' experience of God in first century Palestine was in the midst of oppression and poverty at a time when the image of God was strangled by legalism. Nonetheless, Jesus experienced in His life and actions a merciful and liberating God. He experienced a God who wishes all to live as brothers and sisters. According to Boff, this same experience of God can be found in Latin America among the poor.²⁸⁴

For Boff, this recognition of the experience of God among the poor has importance for Latin American religious. Since religious life is based upon the experience of God, then for religious to find the true God in Latin America, they need to follow Jesus' search for God among the poor as well as continuing His work of liberation. But this places a question before religious: "Where is the favored location for the insertion of religious in the world?" The answer, for Boff, is that religious should insert themselves among the poor where the biblical God can be experienced through the person of the other, the poor.²⁸⁵

281 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 45.

282 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 47-50.

283 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 48-50.

284 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 62-82.

285 L. Boff, *La experiencia de Dios*, p. 88; ("Cuál es el lugar especial de la inserción religiosa en el mundo?"). L. Boff, *La vida religiosa en el proceso de liberación*, 2nd ed. (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1980): esp. 93-109. In the last mentioned book, Boff expands on why Latin American religious have to join the poor's liberation struggle.

Later reflections within CLAR reaffirm this understanding that in Latin America God can be experienced among the poor.²⁸⁶ There are increasing numbers of religious whose experience confirms Sister Arcón's insights.²⁸⁷ The grounding of the religious life on the experience of God among the poor becomes a major theme for CLAR; it is described as one of the five tendencies of Latin American religious life before the Third CELAM conference in Puebla.²⁸⁸

6.3 Following Jesus

For *La vida según el Espíritu* the following of Jesus should lead religious to love, search for God's Will and work for the transformation of unjust social structures. After 1974, religious try to understand more fully the demands which flow from the following of Jesus as well as attempt to clarify their image of Him.

After 1974, the following of Jesus is first of all joined to His experience of reality. Jesus was born among the poor, acquired their perspective on reality and experienced the oppression of life in Palestine under the domination of Rome. Yet Jesus' experience of reality was not merely passive; He also actively responded to this reality of oppression. Through His preaching to the poor and opposition to oppression, Jesus reveals an option for the poor. Finally, Jesus' experienced conflict brought on by His preaching the Good News. It was this conflict which led to His suffering and death. The following of Jesus therefore requires that religious model Jesus and be willing to experience reality as He did: to share the suffering of the poor, to opt for the poor and adopt their perspective, and if necessary to endure persecution.²⁸⁹

The following of Jesus also leads religious to continue His praxis. Jesus centered His life and action around the Kingdom, which He initiated into human history. He sought the transformation of reality and social structures so that a new relationship between God and humanity could arise. Thus in following Jesus, religious should focus their life on the Kingdom and continue His praxis.

But the praxis of Jesus cannot be merely imitated but has to be continued within a specific historical context. The praxis of religious for the Kingdom always has a relationship to ever-changing historical and cultural contexts. In Latin America

286 L. Boff, "Vida religiosa en el contexto," p. 116-120. Also J.H. Pico, "Renovación," *Boletín CLAR* 12:1 (enero, 1974): 3. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 29-37.

287 V. Moreira da Silva, "La religiosa y la pastoral en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 14:1 (enero 1976): 3. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 32-33. B. González Buelta, "Contemplación desde la historia," p. 1-7.

288 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 76-78. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina - Aporte para Puebla," p. 5.

289 C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 41-42. L. Boff, "Vida religiosa en el contexto," p. 118-120. CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 11-12. Idem, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 52-53, 111.

the way of continuing Jesus' praxis for the Kingdom is through support for the poor's liberation.²⁹⁰

Concern also develops about the image of Jesus, which is seen as often misrepresented and distorted in Latin America. One source of misrepresentation comes from an individualistic spirituality which ignores the socio-political dimension of His life and action. Ideologies have also distorted the image of Jesus, using His name to either legitimate injustice or revolutionary guerrilla movements. Finally, popular religion while seeing Jesus as the divine, has failed often to recognize His humanity.²⁹¹

Thus there is a need for a biblically rooted image of Jesus, but this raises a problem since there are many different ways of understanding Jesus within the New Testament. Therefore the question arises which criterion does one use in choosing one over the others.

Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora addresses this question directly and identifies three different ways in which Jesus is interpreted in the New Testament. Each of these interpretations understands Jesus differently and also has a different view of how Christians should follow Him in praxis.

A first way focuses on the proclamation of the faith and understands Jesus' life and death as a unique historical event which was ratified by the Resurrection. The praxis of following Jesus is linked to a faith community and the manifestation of communion among Christians.

A second way of interpreting Jesus' life stresses the universal relevance of His life, depicting the Incarnation as the key event in human history. The praxis which flows from this understanding is action to show the importance of Jesus for all people regardless of culture and nationality.

Finally, Jesus' life and actions are viewed as offering a model for Christian life. From this understanding, Christians have to accept responsibility for the continuation of Jesus' praxis for the construction of the Kingdom in their own historical era.²⁹²

In the light of these three understandings of Jesus, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora* chooses the third approach as most appropriate for Latin America. The reason for this choice is that it makes explicit the link between the following of Jesus and the continuation of His praxis.²⁹³ As the CLAR theological team says:

290 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 76-77, 104-105. C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 43-44. CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 11-12. L. Boff, "Vida religiosa en el contexto," p. 118-120. Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Dimensión política... Resultado de la consulta a la jerarquía," p. 18, 21-22, 42. CELAM and the episcopal conferences from Argentina and Venezuela oppose any recognition of the political dimensions to Jesus' life and actions.

291 C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 34-35. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 23, 42-49. S. Galilea, *Pastoral popular y urbana*, p. 58-64.

292 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 66-78.

293 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 71.

"It is above all the *historical situation* of the community in its *distinctive culture* and from its social location which favors this type of presentation."²⁹⁴

Within CLAR discussions a variety of images are presented for Jesus: as poor, as an evangelizer, as a prophet, and, the most common, Jesus as the liberator.²⁹⁵

These images stress different aspects of Jesus' life and are not mutually exclusive.

In fact, common agreement exists about some elements:

- Jesus' life and actions were centered on the Kingdom, which He manifested and sought to advance in history.²⁹⁶
- Jesus sought the creation of new relationships. In His life and action Jesus revealed that the Kingdom demands new relationships with God and others. This is because the love of God is inseparable from love of neighbor.²⁹⁷
- Jesus made a clear option for the poor who were the first to hear the Good News and were favored in his words and actions. Jesus also tried to free the poor from their oppression.²⁹⁸
- Jesus displayed a radical freedom in the face of existing social and religious institutions. This freedom allowed Him to critique and oppose all institutions which oppress people rather than serve them.²⁹⁹
- Jesus' preaching caused conflict with established political and religious leaders. It was this conflict which eventually led to His death.³⁰⁰

6.4 Consecration-mission

La vida según el Espíritu described the consecration of religious as involving: a) a public commitment b) of a radical way to live the baptismal consecration c) which provides an eschatological witness d) that is prophetic, e) incarnated in society, and e) inseparable from mission. These elements remain in CLAR discussions but a further deepening of reflection occurs on four issues: the relationship between consecration and mission, the relationship between religious and

294 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 67.

295 "Cincuenta superiores hablan de la pobreza en su dimensión teológica y sociológica," *Boletín CLAR* (junio 1974): 4-5. J. Gómez, "Jesús evangelizador," p. 9-26. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 46-47. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 26-50. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 71-78.

296 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 71-76. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 52-53. J. Gómez, "Jesús evangelizador," p. 13. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 32-39.

297 J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 52. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 52-53. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 73.

298 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 54-55. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 46.

299 R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 68-75. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 910. Idem, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 52-53. L. Boff, "Vida religiosa en el contexto," p. 118-120.

300 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 909. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 52-53. J. Gómez, "Jesús evangelizador," p. 22-23.

baptismal consecration, the meaning of the eschatological witness, and where religious life should incarnate itself in Latin American society.

The link between religious consecration and mission is unquestioned but further discussion seeks a fuller understanding of the mission of religious life. Sister Vilma Moreira discusses the relationship between consecration and mission for religious. Reviewing the Bible, she finds that God's call to a person is always joined to mission, although s/he is free to accept or reject it. Since religious consecration also flows from a call by God, Sister Moreira agrees that religious consecration always has a relationship to mission. Yet she does not stop with this re-affirmation of *La vida según el Espíritu*, but tries to obtain a more complete understanding of religious life's mission. Referring to the opinions of several theologians, Sister Moreira comes to the conclusion that religious consecration is made "by God for others."³⁰¹ Consecration is thus not the work of a person but God's call of a religious for service to others. While this does not represent a change from *La vida según el Espíritu* it broadens the understanding of mission further, equating it with service.³⁰²

Within CLAR discussions there is a recognition that the Second Vatican Council's proclamation on the equality of all Christians is a challenge for religious, causing some to wonder if religious life is redundant. The crux of the challenge lies in defining the relationship between the religious and baptismal consecration. According to Sister Vilma Moreira, clarity about this relationship is "*the essence of the question about the religious life today.*"³⁰³

Though a topic of much discussion, no new insights are offered beyond those in *La vida según el Espíritu*. The religious consecration is still seen as a radical expression of the baptismal consecration. This radicalness is understood as the offering of a clear eschatological witness, showing a new way of relating to God and others.³⁰⁴

The eschatological witness of religious consecration receives much attention. This eschatological witness is understood as having two different but inter-related levels. First, there is a personal level in which religious, individually and communally, witness that they are free people who strive to ever deeper commit-

301 V. Moreira da Silva, *Compromiso religioso en la historia*, p. 52; ("por Dios para los hermanos").

302 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 33.

303 V. Moreira da Silva, *Compromiso religioso en la historia*, p. 47.

304 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 74-75. E. Delaney, *Caminos de la vida religiosa*, p. 50-51. G. Pennock, *Vida religiosa y vocación bautismal*, p. 17-19. C. Palmés, *Teología bautismal y vida religiosa renovada*, p. 32-39, 69-77. A. Panqueva, "La consagración religiosa a la luz del documento CLAR número 14," *Boletín CLAR* 12:3 (marzo 1974): 6-8. "Revisando lo fundamental de nuestra vida religiosa. La experiencia de Nicaragua," *Boletín CLAR* 12:3 (marzo 1974): 1, 3. V. Moreira da Silva, *Compromiso religioso en la historia*, p. 60.

ment to God and renunciation of sin.³⁰⁵ The second level of the eschatological witness of religious life presents a social critique and this receives the most attention within the CLAR discussions. This critique is understood as prophetic, requiring that religious be a constant witness against all social or ecclesial structures which are unjust and claim immutability. Religious have to judge all social and ecclesial structures in relation to the Kingdom, revealing that these can always be improved.³⁰⁶

This eschatological witness of religious involves a critical stance in relation to all social and ecclesial structures but also active participation in the construction of the Kingdom, which in Latin America demands support for the poor's liberation. In this way religious furthermore reveal to all Christians their common duty to build the Kingdom in history.³⁰⁷

Finally, the incarnational dimension of the eschatological witness undergoes an important shift. Since the religious' witness of the Kingdom must be incarnated in the socio-cultural reality, a question arises where this incarnation should occur in Latin American societies, rent by social conflict. Though very carefully discussed, the answer is clear. In order to make the clearest public witness of the Kingdom, religious need to incarnate themselves in the life and struggle of the poor.³⁰⁸ At the 1979 CLAR General Assembly (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic), the *comunidades insertas* are described as a form of religious community which allows this incarnation. By relocating a religious community among the poor "religious life will be changed into a sign for the construction of a new people, a new society based on love."³⁰⁹

6.5 Evangelical counsels

La vida según el Espíritu depicted the evangelical counsels as providing a balance between the renunciation dimension of religious consecration and the need for incarnation in the world. The evangelical counsels were further viewed as a renunciation of certain natural rights, such as marriage and private property, and a

305 V. Moreira da Silva, *Compromiso religioso en la historia*, p. 60. "Revisando lo fundamental de nuestra vida religiosa," p. 3. A. Panqueva, "La consagración religiosa," p. 6-8.

306 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 28-29. Idem, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 26. Idem, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 20. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 45-46. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 98-105.

307 C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad de la vida religiosa en América Latina*, Colección CLAR 30 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 28-29. Idem, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 92-95. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 41-42. J.H. Pico, "Renovación," p. 2-3. CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 11-12. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 18.

308 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 28-29. Idem, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 20.

309 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 105.

denunciation of social injustice. This general understanding of the three evangelical counsels remains.³¹⁰ However, the renunciation aspect of the evangelical counsels is increasingly portrayed in terms of social witness, with less mention of it as a renunciation of some natural rights. Religious through fidelity to the vows renounce not 'the world' but social injustice and sinful structures.³¹¹

The major interest in the evangelical counsels is centered around the need to re-interpret these in relation to the Latin American context. The pivot of the discussion, as previously, is evangelical poverty.

For CLAR, the evangelical counsels need re-interpretation in relation to the context of Latin America. This is because European and North American theological interpretations are seen as not necessarily relevant in Latin America. A further reason is that religious life had to make itself understandable by the people. In order to do this, the evangelical counsels have to be re-interpreted in context of the dependency and oppression which marks the lives of most Latin Americans.³¹²

As a part of this re-interpretation, attempts are made to understand the evangelical counsels beyond juridical categories. For Leonardo Boff the value of the evangelical counsels goes beyond their role as ecclesial regulations and are anthropologically grounded. Through fidelity to the evangelical counsels, religious show concretely a new way of relating to the three central dimensions of human life: the material world, sexuality and community.³¹³

Another understanding of the vows, though not frequent, reflects an awareness of the history of religious life. Reviewing history, it is seen that the evangelical counsels are a relatively late development in religious life. This leads some religious to conclude that the evangelical counsels are historical and created only in order to institutionalize certain values. Thus while having value the evangelical counsels are not determinative for religious life.³¹⁴

Evangelical poverty once again draws the most attention in CLAR discussions and its practice is seen as linked with concerns about the authenticity of religious life. In the light of massive material poverty under which most Latin Americans suffer, the lifestyle of most religious is far from poor. The practice by religious of

310 R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 114-122. J.B. Libânio, *Vida religiosa y testimonio público*, p. 85-94. CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 14-15. J. Sobrino, *El celibato cristiano en el Tercer Mundo*, Colección Perspectivas 5 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 55-96.

311 C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad*, p. 45-48. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 48-49.

312 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 26, 32-33. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 46-47.

313 L. Boff, *Pobreza, obediencia y realización personal en la vida religiosa*, Colección CLAR 22 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1975): 16-59, esp. 16-20.

314 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 76. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 46-47. L. Boff, *Pobreza, obediencia y realización personal*, p. 14-15.

evangelical poverty is seen as highlighting in a tangible and concrete form the gulf which separates religious life from the poor and damages its eschatological witness.³¹⁵ In the light of this situation, evangelical poverty is seen as demanding material poverty by religious, individually and communally. While the need for material poverty by religious was mentioned in *La vida según el Espíritu*, it was not a major point. After 1974, this changes and the material dimension of evangelical poverty is seen as necessary for its re-interpretation in the Latin American context and the recovery of the eschatological witness by religious.³¹⁶

The example of a religious community, living in poverty, is further seen as providing a model for the entire Latin American society. Previously, it was seen that one understanding the vow of poverty was through a communal sharing of goods, modelling the Jerusalem community. This understanding reappears, though not as a dominant theme, and merges with the need for a communal witness of material poverty. A religious community, living in poverty, demonstrates to Latin America that personal property is never absolute and that common ownership is possible so that no one suffers from material need.³¹⁷

Evangelical poverty is also equated with solidarity and the option for the poor. Through a materially poor lifestyle, religious attempt to establish communion with the poor and show solidarity to their liberation struggle as an expression of Christian love. One source of this linkage is Pope Paul IV's *Evangelica Testificatio* which similarly joins evangelical poverty to social justice and the need to hear the 'cry of the poor' (ET 17).³¹⁸

Finally the practice of evangelical poverty is increasingly, though very guardedly, given a social location. While it is rarely stated that evangelical poverty demands the insertion among the poor,³¹⁹ the *comunidades insertas* present a model for the practice of evangelical poverty which is relevant for Latin America. Living among the poor in *comunidades insertas*, religious express radically an option for the poor through adopting the social location, perspective, and struggle of the poor. Furthermore in the *comunidades insertas*, the poor teach religious how to be poor, and witness authentically evangelical poverty in Latin America.³²⁰

315 C. Palmés, "Informe del presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," *Boletín CLAR* 14:2 (febrero-marzo 1976): 6.

316 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 81-82. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 28-31.

317 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 13-14. R. Antoncich, *Vida religiosa y derechos humanos*, p. 112. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 82. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 77. The last mentioned book contains one of the few post-1974 references to evangelical poverty as binding on all Christians.

318 G. Pennock, *Vida religiosa y vocación bautismal*, p. 20-22. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 26-27. C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad*, p. 51-52. E. Delaney, "Nuevas perspectivas," p. 147-148.

319 "Cinuenta superiores hablan," p. 5. An exception where it is stated.

320 J.H. Pico, "Renovación," p. 4-5. C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 117-118. CLAR,

6.6 Charism of religious life

La vida según el Espíritu described religious life as having a charism from the Spirit which permits a unique way of Christian life that is rooted in the founder/ess' spirituality and offers service to the Church and others. Reflections after 1974 follow this understanding of the religious charism. Nonetheless, the stress is that charism of religious life is only understood in relationship to Christians, who likewise have received charisms from the Spirit. The charism of religious life is thus not a sign of superiority but demands that religious fulfill a different role. Within the Church, the charism of religious life acts as a force for the renewal of the institution, always endangered from the effects of institutionalization. Within society, the charism of religious life enables an eschatological witness as well as service to social needs.³²¹

Some religious go so far as to give the charisms a distinct social location. They claim that charisms arise only from the margins of the Church and society. Only there does the Spirit work so as to renew the Church and religious congregations.³²²

Within CLAR there is further discussion about the charism of the founders. Attempts are made to more fully understand this foundational charism and how it can be interpreted in the context of Latin America. Religious recognize the diversity of congregations which flows from different charisms of the founder/ess but in spite of this diversity, common elements are identified which bind all congregational charisms. Each charism of the founders is seen as rooted in a general charism of religious life, the result of a free response to the Spirit's call. Through this general charism, all religious are called to radically follow Jesus and provide an eschatological witness. The general charism of religious life also requires that religious have a relationship with the poor. The option for the poor is seen as having "very deep roots in the history of orders and congregations and in the life of their foundations."³²³ Another common element of all religious founder's charisms is that they are contextual. As gifts of the Spirit they were given to men and women who responded to the Spirit through life and action for the Kingdom. This response was always contextually related to the local culture and historical reality. However, in order to maintain this contextual aspect of

Experiencia latinoamericana, p. 47-48, 82-83. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 81-82. Idem, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 4-5.

321 C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad*, p. 26-27. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 67-71. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 68, 137. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 44.

322 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 68. E. Delaney, "Nuevas perspectivas de la vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 12:9 (septiembre 1974): 4, 7.

323 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 81; ("...raíz muy profunda en la historia de las Ordenes y Congregaciones y en la vida de sus fundaciones").

foundational charisms, religious have to continually re-interpret and re-incarnate them in different historical and socio-cultural contexts.³²⁴

Latin American religious also seek to interpret the charism of the founders in relationship to the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality. Since the charisms of the founders are contextual, they also incorporate traits from the culture of their birth as well as the experience of the Spirit. For CLAR, this means that some elements of the foundational charisms are historically conditional while others are essential. A way to separate the two is seen as necessary for the interpretation of the charism of the founders in Latin America.³²⁵ As CLAR theologian Camilo Maccise says:

“the religious life will be a sign and instrument of liberation in the measure that it shakes itself from its numerous historical forms which ‘extinguish the Spirit’ and prevents its members from being apostles of the liberation of Jesus Christ....”³²⁶

The interpretation of the founder’s charisms is seen as involving the separation of the essential from the historically conditional, as well as its incarnation in Latin America. The approach from *La vida según el Espíritu* is once again followed. The interpretation of the congregational charisms has to begin with the ecclesial and social needs of Latin America. Religious should search for the needs of the continent which must be addressed and re-interpret their foundational charisms in the light of responding to these.³²⁷ In Latin America this is seen as demanding that the charisms of the founders respond to the needs of the poor and their struggle for liberation.³²⁸

There is, however, another reason why the present Latin American reality is the beginning point for the interpretation of the congregational charisms. There is within CLAR discussions a suspicion about past histories of religious congregations and their interpretations of the founders’ charisms. Under the influence of a past legalist focus and the effect of institutionalization, much of the original meaning of the foundational charisms is seen to have been lost or misinterpreted.³²⁹

324 C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad*, p. 38-39. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 24, 37. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 45.

325 E. Delaney, “Nuevas perspectivas de la vida religiosa,” p. 4, 7. C. Palmés, “Una vida religiosa más auténtica [XIII Junta Directiva, Costa Rica],” p. 2. CLAR, “Plan Global de la CLAR,” p. 17.

326 C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 27; (“...la vida religiosa será signo de liberación e instrumento de liberación en la medida en que logre sacudirse la infinidad de condicionamientos históricos que ‘apagan el Espíritu’ e impiden que sus miembros sean apóstoles de la liberación de Jesucristo...”).

327 C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 56. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 68-70. C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad*, p. 38-39. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 90.

328 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 92, 95.

329 C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 16-32. C. Palmés, “Una vida religiosa más auténtica [XIII Junta Directiva, Costa Rica],” p. 2. J.H. Pico, “Renovación,” p. 1-5. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 65-66.

6.7 Community

Discussion about religious community undergoes an important shift. While accepting the basic needs which each community should meet, as expressed in *La vida según el Espíritu*, these are now placed in a broader context.

Prior to 1974 religious sought internal renewal of their community life structures for personal development and authentic fraternity. This desire for internal renewal of community life structures remains but becomes joined to mission and the need for a different relationship with the poor.

This shift occurs for several reasons. First of all there is the growing recognition that religious consecration is linked to mission. A consequence of this is that the internal renewal of internal life cannot be divorced from religious' evangelization and pastoral activity. Another reason for this shift is that the public witness of religious life is seen as a communal sign of the Kingdom, not an individual one. As this eschatological witness is always in need of incarnation, religious communities face the need to have themselves incarnated among the people so that their eschatological witness can be comprehensible. Finally, the experience of the *comunidades insertas*. By living among the poor, inserted religious see that their internal community problems and concerns are relativized and made less urgent in the face of the poor's suffering.³³⁰

Another shift within CLAR discussions comes from the example of the *comunidades insertas*, which are seen as establishing a dialectical relationship which benefits both religious and the poor. Religious among the poor are challenged to live more authentically evangelical poverty and learn important values from the poor's culture. By incorporating these values in their community life, religious in turn provide a service to the poor. Religious purify and systematize the poor's values and offer a concrete communal model of them for the poor. In this way the poor can see how their values can serve as a basis for a new Latin American society not based on oppression. Thus for CLAR the religious community can fulfill the role of the organic intellectual in Gramsci's thought.³³¹

The *comunidades insertas* are also described as having a dialectical relationship with their own congregations. The *comunidades insertas* provide a service to the congregations by witnessing a different form of community form which responds both to the internal needs of religious and to the poor. Inserted religious receive

330 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 77-78. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 44, 95-98.

331 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 27-28, 33. Idem, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 51-54. Idem, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 4-6. Idem, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 38-40. Idem, *Vida religiosa ...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 44-47. M. Agudelo, "Colaboración entre los religiosos en América," *Boletín CLAR* 14:9 (septiembre 1976): 5-6. "El hombre nuevo: Un desafío a la vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 14:8 (agosto 1976): 3. E. Delaney, "Nuevas perspectivas," p. 150.

support and assistance from other members of their congregations who are not inserted among the poor.³³²

The *comunidades insertas* are described as an example for all Latin American religious. The 1979 CLAR General Assembly says that in the future "congregations will be composed of a large network of small communities."³³³

6.8 The People of God

Soon after the Second Vatican Council the People of God became the most popular image of Church within CLAR discussions. This continues in CLAR's reflections after 1974³³⁴ and attempts are made to more fully understand the meaning of the Church as the People of God in the context of Latin America.

People of God arising from the poor

Información teológica y pastoral discusses the People of God, seeing it as a powerful model of Church which stresses the equality of all Christians. *Información teológica y pastoral* provides several insights into the meaning of this People of God. First of all, *Información teológica y pastoral* states that while the Church is God's creation, human efforts are necessary in its construction. The Church can be seen as a community where individuals respond to the call by God to form fraternity among themselves and with others. While the Church flows from this divine call, it is mediated through other people whose effort is necessary for the construction of the Church community, so that there can be an individual and communal response to God.

Información teológica y pastoral also pleads for the use of sociology for internal Church analysis. The Church, although never able to be completely defined within sociological categories, is a social institution which has to make a clear witness of the Kingdom in Latin America. Through the use of sociology, the Church can be analyzed to see where changes are necessary for a clearer institutional witness. Finally for *Información teológica y pastoral*, the model of the People of God, reflecting fraternity and equality is seen as a goal to which the Church should strive so that every Christian can experience him/herself as an equal member of

332 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 109-111. Idem, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 44-47. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 97. CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 12-13, 19-20.

333 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 110; ("Las Congregaciones estarán formadas por un gran comunión de pequeñas comunidades"). The term 'small communities' [i.e. *pequeñas comunidades*, or in Portuguese *pequenas comunidades*] is often a source of confusion, as shall later be discussed in Chapter 8. Sometimes it is used to refer to *comunidades insertas*, as is done in *Experiencia latinoamericana de vida religiosa*. However, at other times *pequenas comunidades* refers to small communities which are a precursor of the *comunidades insertas* in Latin America.

334 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 67-68. C. Maccise, *Ser signos de liberación*, p. 68-70. C. Palmés, "La CLAR: Un signo de esperanza [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," p. 6.

the Church community. Every baptized has, furthermore, a right, flowing from Baptism, to community with other Christians – a right which is trampled upon in the reality of Latin America. The Church as People of God would not just allow for such community and equality but also work to continue Jesus' actions, thereby expanding community to all peoples.³³⁵

Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora, based upon reflections with *comunidades insertas*, discusses the People of God in the context of Latin American oppression and dependency. For *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, several problems plague any discussion of the People of God in Latin America. The Church, far from being a symbol of equality, has often legitimated social oppression. A additional problem is that the Church has also a social structure and has been affected by the power of dependency. Finally, the members of the Latin American Church, the People of God, have been turned by dependency into a nameless mass, unaware of their dignity or equality as baptized Christians.

In this condition with a Church composed of massified members, the People of God becomes a goal. But as a goal the People of God is seen as joined to efforts for the construction of new social structures. As Latin Americans, denied of identity and oppressed, search for a new society, so the Church is fashioning a People of God aware of its dignity and need to follow Jesus' liberating actions. By remaking itself into the People of God, the Church furthers the creation of a new Latin America, through showing to all their dignity and need to support liberation as a way to follow Jesus.

The development of the People of God is seen by *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora* as emerging from amongst the poor. Tracing the growth of the Israelite people in the Old Testament, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora* finds proof that God shapes God's people from among the poor on the margins of society. Thus in Latin America the creation of the People of God begins from the poor but does not exclude the rich. Poor and rich alike belong to the People of God if they support the poor's liberation.³³⁶

Finally, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora* states that sometimes the ecclesiological model of the People of God is used as a way to mask over a reality of social conflict. In 1978 the CLAR theological team object to the CELAM theologians' use of the 'People of God' in the Work Document for Puebla. For the CLAR theologians, the Work Document uses the 'People of God' to stress Church unity and avoid how the conflict in Latin American society affects the Church. The problem is that while there is a unity and equality between all

335 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 53-60.

336 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 21-24, 46-56, 62-63, 92-93. Idem, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 12. M. Agudelo, "Colaboración entre los religiosos," p. 6. J. Marins, "Desafío a la misión evangelizadora," p. 86-92.

Christians because of Baptism, some Christians are exploiting their brothers and sisters.³³⁷

Charismatic and hierarchical poles of Church

CLAR after 1974 reflects upon the relationship between religious and the hierarchy in terms of a previously seen image, namely the Church with charismatic and institutional poles.³³⁸ The relationship between religious and bishops is seen as so important that it is the first topic of reflection by the CLAR theological team. But it is necessary to realize that CLAR's reflection on this relationship is done amidst increasing tension with CELAM, as some bishops view CLAR as a rival which seeks to become an alternative magisterium.³³⁹

A initial reflection on the relationship between religious and the hierarchy occurs in *Información teológica y pastoral*. Relying on *Lumen Gentium* (LG 7; 12), the Church is viewed as having charismatic and institutional dimensions with priority given to the former. The reason for this is that the Church is at its birth charismatic with ecclesial institutions coming later.

This vision of the Church with charismatic and institutional poles reflects the influence of Max Weber. The Church's original charism is seen as the Gospel which throughout history needs institutionalization that nonetheless can never completely capture the Gospel's fullness. Thus though the Church is divine in origin, it is in constant need of renewal in order to ever more fully institutionalize the Gospel.

This renewal of ecclesial institutions arises from the charismatic dimension of the Church from which arise new ministries and services that allow the Church to renew itself and respond to new historical needs. Religious life is identified as a part of the charismatic pole of the Church, as are the *CEBS*.³⁴⁰

Following *Información teológica y pastoral*, the CLAR theological team also reflects on the relationship between the hierarchy and religious. Its reflections result in at least one letter of protest from an episcopal conference.³⁴¹

337 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 912-913.

338 Cf. p. 28.

339 C. Palmés, "La CLAR: Un signo de esperanza [XIV Junta Directiva, Costa Rica]," p. 5-6. Idem, "Informe del presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 3-5. CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 3. Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Dimensión política... Resultado de la consulta a la jerarquía," p. 16. Another indication of the tense relationship between CELAM and CLAR can be seen in the reaction to *Dimensión política*'s mention that there is an "inertia in the traditional ecclesial structures." CELAM reacts strongly to this comment, which by no means is a central claim of the document, and states that CLAR is unfair to the bishops.

340 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 53-70, esp. 68. L. Colussi, "Nuevos ministerios en la Iglesia," *Boletín CLAR* 12:7 (julio 1974): 1, 7-8. The authors mention how new ministries arise in the *CEBS* to fulfill communal needs and this is seen as an indication that ministries are linked first to community and are only later institutionalized.

341 C. Palmés, "La CLAR: Un signo de esperanza [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," p. 5-6. B.

For the CLAR theologians, the Church has charismatic and institutional poles both of which are essential and not *per se* in opposition. The bishops are seen as representative of the institutional pole and have the responsibility for ecclesial structures, pastoral works, and orthodoxy. The bishops also are responsible for the coordination of charisms in the Church and should be open to new charisms which may arise from the Spirit. As part of this charismatic responsibility the bishops also help religious congregations in the preservation of their charism and the furtherance of internal renewal. Yet for the CLAR theologians, the bishop must not be seen as a superior, above all other members in the Church. Rather he has a specific charism for service to the entire Church.

Religious, on the other hand, are representatives of the charismatic pole which originates not from the Church hierarchy but the Spirit, as the Council affirmed in *Lumen Gentium* 44.³⁴² As a part of the charismatic pole, religious have to make a prophetic witness within the Church, questioning existing ecclesial structures and pastoral actions in order to show how improvement is always possible for a clearer manifestation of the Gospel. In this way religious remind the institutional pole of the Church of its ongoing need for renewal and the fact that all ecclesial structures are imperfect reflections of the Kingdom's fullness. Another part of this prophetic witness is that religious remind the institution that it needs to dedicate itself, as Jesus did, to the service of the Kingdom.

The CLAR team understands the relationship between bishops and religious in terms of a dialectic. Religious are members of the local Church and must serve the bishop, yet because of their pontifical status they are not restricted to only one diocese. In this way religious demonstrate a certain distance from all local churches which allows them to relativize ecclesial structures and pastoral practices.³⁴³

This understanding of the relationship between religious and the hierarchy is continued in later CLAR reflections which stress that it is the charismatic religious who have an important role in the renewal of the Church. Likewise religious are viewed as having a certain independence from the local bishop, based upon an interpretation of *Lumen Gentium* 44.³⁴⁴

Kloppenburger, "Relaciones entre obispos y religiosos," *CELAM* 8 96 (julio 1975) 3, 7-10, 15. It is interesting to note that at the same time CLAR publishes its views, CELAM publishes an article in which Frei Bonaventura Kloppenburger stresses that religious need to co-operate with the local bishop. He also warns that organizations, such as CLAR, risk becoming a parallel magisterium.

342 A sentence from *LG* 44: "Thus, the state which is constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, though it is not the hierarchical structure of the Church, nevertheless, undeniably belongs to its life and holiness."

343 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Relaciones entre obispos y religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 12 5 (mayo 1974) 1, 4-6. Idem, "Relaciones entre obispos y religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 13 6 (junio 1975) 2-5. Idem, "Relaciones entre obispos-religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 13 7 (julio 1975) 1-5.

344 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 70-74. S. Galilea, "El profetismo de la

Finally, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora* sees the Church in terms of institution and charism. The contrast is seen as between the institutional Church, which is clerical and focuses on sacramental service, and charismatic communities, which are relational and extend beyond traditional Church boundaries. From the charismatic and institutional poles of the Church, different forms of ministry and perspectives are seen as emerging. But for *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, these are not the only differences between the charismatic and institutional poles in the Church. They are seen as also having different social locations. The Church institution is centered "among the rich of the country and in the rich nations of the world"³⁴⁵. Contrasted to this is the charismatic Church, formed by small communities, which is based among the poor.³⁴⁶

vida consagrada," *Boletín CLAR* 12 5 (mayo 1974) 3, 7. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 10. Some examples of this use of LG 44 appear in Idem, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 106. Idem, *Vida religiosa a partir de Medellín*, p. 61.

345 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 95.

346 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 96.

7 Liberating evangelization

7.0 Introduction

Chapter 6 reviewed how CLAR and the Latin American religious joined their search for identity with the world of the poor. Discussions within CLAR after 1974 built upon the basic understandings of religious life found in *La vida según el Espíritu*. But CLAR did not simply stop at a re-affirmation of *La vida según el Espíritu* but sought to make religious life authentic both in the context of Latin America as well as in relation to its own past. This concern for authenticity led to considerations which expand on *La vida según el Espíritu*, especially on the charism of the founders and the Church. But what was striking in CLAR's reflection on religious life identity between 1974 until 1979 was the importance given to the social location of the poor. Among the poor religious could: experience the biblical God, encounter lost values of religious life, continue the liberating praxis of Jesus, and live authentic evangelical poverty.

Finally, Chapter 6 pointed out that the *comunidades insertas* were seen as a concrete model for religious in Latin America. Through insertion among the poor, religious could establish new, mutually enriching dialectical relationships with the poor and their own congregations.

Chapter 7 describes the CLAR's focus after 1974 on a liberating evangelization, which connects the work of evangelization with active support for the poor's liberation in Latin America. Support for this connection is found in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*,³⁴⁷ as well as the Second Vatican Council.

CLAR's acceptance of a liberating evangelization represents a rejection of other approaches. There is no longer discussion about support for development³⁴⁸ and

347 S. Galilea, "Entre Medellín y la III Conferencia," in *Los religiosos en la pastoral*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 34 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 13-22. R. Muñoz, "Criterios teológicos-pastorales de evangelización," in *Los religiosos en la pastoral*, p. 34-38. CLAR, "Plan Global de la CLAR 1976," in *Vida religiosa en América Latina. Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, by equipo teólogos CLAR, Colección CLAR 20 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1976): 52-53. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 98-104. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 10-12.

348 F. Gayot, "Evangelización y desarrollo desde el ángulo pastoral," *Boletín CLAR* 12:4 (abril 1974): 7-8. This is the only mention of support for development but it is from a 1973 speech before the Haitian Religious Conference.

traditional evangelization is seen as deficient for a variety of reasons. Finally, though never a main focus for CLAR, the Joint Pastoral Plans are criticized for theological and practical reasons.³⁴⁹

Yet for CLAR, there are very real challenges which any liberating evangelization has to address. Chapter 7 reviews this challenges as well as the general vision which emerges as a way to respond to them.

Finally, CLAR's acceptance of a liberating evangelization exacerbates an already tense relationship with CELAM. CLAR's rejection of traditional evangelization, the political involvement by some religious, and the departure of many religious from schools and hospitals cause bishops to view CLAR's efforts as disruptive to the Church's pastoral efforts and ideologically motivated. CLAR makes efforts to improve this relationship and begins a joint study with CELAM in 1974 over the role of religious communities in the local church.³⁵⁰ The study is never completed. The gap between the CLAR and CELAM has become too great, both viewing evangelization from radically different perspectives: one institutional and the other liberating.³⁵¹

7.1 Liberating evangelization – a rupture

A liberating evangelization represents a rupture with both the Joint Pastoral Plans as well as traditional forms of evangelization. This rupture is justified through experience by religious as well as for historical and theological reasons.

Joint Pastoral Plans?

Based upon the experience of religious, the Joint Pastoral Plans (*Pastoral de Conjunto*) become a target of criticism. One reason for criticism, especially from women religious, is that religious are insufficiently consulted in the preparation of the Joint Pastoral Plans. Coupled to this are complaints of a practical nature, namely that the implementation of the Joint Pastoral Plans is often ineffectively done.

Criticism of the Joint Pastoral Plans is also advanced for theological reasons. The Joint Pastoral Plans are seen as treating religious as pastoral workers, ignoring

349 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 88, 101.

350 "Estudio conjunto CELAM-CLAR 'Significado de las comunidades religiosas en América Latina'," *Boletín CLAR* 11:4 (abril 1973): 1-2.

351 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 87-95. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 36-40. R. Antoncich, "Carisma institucional y Pastoral de Conjunto," in *Los religiosos en la pastoral*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 34 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1977): 53-62. C. Palmés "Una vida religiosa más auténtica [XIII Junta Directiva, Costa Rica]," p. 3. Idem, "Informe del presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 7. Equipo Teológico-Pastoral CELAM, "Alguns aspectos da evangelização na América Latina," *SEDOC* (setembro 1974): 197-228. A clear example of CELAM's perspective on evangelization appears in this report for the 1974 Synod of Bishops. Two principal concerns for the CELAM theologians are the challenges posed by development and secularization in Latin America.

their charisms and the role which these should play in evangelization.³⁵² A more serious complaint is that the Joint Pastoral Plans reinforce a hierarchical model of Church which does not recognize the role of all, lay and cleric, in the Church's evangelization. The CLAR theological team says that such approach clashes with the Second Vatican Council and that evangelization must "stop being a technique or a work directed by the head of a business and governed by agents who have character of executives...."³⁵³

A final criticism of the Joint Pastoral Plans surfaces around the relationship between pastoral work and religious life. For many religious, parish work, a main concern of the Joint Pastoral Plans as well as traditional evangelization, is incompatible with religious life because it encourages an activism which is disruptive for community life and prayer.³⁵⁴

Historical continuity or rupture?

A review of Latin American history leads CLAR to see that a rupture with traditional forms of evangelization is necessary. This conclusion flows from a realization that the first evangelization of Latin America was linked with the colonial conquest. Religious were the principal agents of this initial evangelization and for the most part supported the colonial conquests of Spain and Portugal. They were, furthermore, seen by the Indian peoples as part of the colonial conquest.

Not only were religious a part of the colonial project but their missionary approach reinforced it. Religious who came to Latin America reflected the post-Tridentine ecclesial mentality (i.e. hierarchical, clerical, and legalistic) which viewed the Indians as godless pagans, who needed conversion. For religious, this conversion could be obtained through learning Church dogma and the reception of the sacraments. One consequence of this approach was that the initial evangelization of Latin America was superficial. Indians embraced Christianity more out of fear than conviction and many secretly retained their traditional religions.

For CLAR the initial evangelization is not past history but continues in the traditional evangelization practices of the Church. Through a stress on clericalism and

352 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Relaciones entre obispos-religiosos," p. 4-5. Idem, "Vida religiosa en América Latina - Aporte para Puebla," p. 1. V. Moreira da Silva, "La mujer en el Documento de Consulta para Puebla y en la Iglesia latinoamericana," in *Evangelización en América Latina en torno a Puebla*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1978): 60.

353 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Relaciones entre obispos y religiosos [mayo, 1974-jk]," p. 6; ("dejará de ser una técnica o una mecánica dirigida por un jefe de empresa y gobernada por agentes que tienen carácter de ejecutivos...."). Idem, "Vida religiosa en América Latina - Aporte para Puebla," p. 2.

354 C. Palmés, "La CLAR: Un signo de esperanza [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," p. 4. R. Antoncich, "Carisma institucional y Pastoral de Conjunto," *Boletín CLAR* 15:11 (noviembre 1977): 1-4. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina - Aporte para Puebla," p. 4.

the hierarchy, the poor are treated as passive objects who are seen as only lacking correct information about the faith and a more frequent reception of the sacraments. Continuity with the initial evangelization is also seen by the fact that traditional evangelization of the Church has little concern that the people develop a personal faith and an experience of God. Finally, traditional evangelization continues the initial evangelization in the presentation of Church dogma which is taught as neither liberating nor empowering for the poor.³⁵⁵ A rupture with existing traditional evangelization practices is thus seen as necessary. A rupture which can lead religious to solidarity with the poor and to "share their struggles."³⁵⁶

Theological reasons for a rupture

CLAR sees two theological reasons why a traditional evangelization can no longer be followed by religious. A first reason flows from an interpretation of *Lumen Gentium's* People of God, which is understood as requiring a major shift in the Church's evangelization. Within the Church, as People of God, everyone, lay and cleric, is given charisms from the Spirit for service. These charisms should be recognized and incorporated into the Church's evangelization thus allowing each Christian to fulfill his/her role.³⁵⁷ A second theological reason for the rejection of traditional evangelization rests upon CLAR's understanding of religious consecration. Following *La vida según el Espíritu*, the consecration of religious is understood as joined to mission. However, this mission is not seen as restricted to parochial or sacramental ministry but should manifest the Kingdom in word and action. In Latin America, this eschatological witness needs to include denunciation of social injustice and support for the poor's liberation. Finally, traditional forms of evangelization are seen as reinforcing the poor's lack of community through accenting individualism as well as a dualistic separation of faith and daily life. Formation of community among the poor is seen as a possible way to change this and allow for an evangelization which is communal and integrates faith into the poor's daily life.³⁵⁸ In other words a liberating evangelization is necessary by religious.³⁵⁹

355 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 28-29. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 110-112. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 20-22.

356 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 19; ("compartir sus luchas"). The words *la lucha* (i.e. 'struggle') and *los oprimidos* (i.e. 'the oppressed') are words charged with emotion. Some see the use of both words as reflecting a Marxist perspective of class struggle. Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Dimensión política... Resultado de la consulta a la jerarquía," p. 17, 23-24.

357 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Relaciones entre obispos y religiosos [mayo 1974-jk]," p. 6. Idem, *Vida religiosa... Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 36-41. L. Colussi, "Nuevos ministerios en la Iglesia," p. 7-8. C. Palmés, "Informe del presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 3-5.

358 C. de Lora, "Medellín y la catequesis," p. 63-75, esp. 73-75. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 93-98.

359 C. Palmés, "Informe del presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 4-5. Equipo

7.2 Challenges for a liberating evangelization

Several challenges, previously seen, are recognized with little discussion. It is generally accepted that a liberating evangelization is challenged to: support the poor's liberation, enable the poor's culture to be an alternative to the social *status quo*, and address the over-concentration of religious in large urban areas.³⁶⁰ However, other challenges appear, some of which echo prior concerns, that a liberating evangelization must face.

Community for the Church and social change

Once again religious see the lack of community as an important challenge for any liberating evangelization. However after 1974, this lack of community is viewed as offering both a theological and a socio-political challenge for any liberating evangelization.

Theologically, a lack of community prevents the poor from an awareness of themselves as full and equal members in the Church. Rather than seeing their equality to other Christians in a living community, the poor experience even within the Church the social gulf and isolation of the Latin American socio-political reality.³⁶¹ Formation of community among the poor is seen as a possible way to change this and allow for an evangelization which is communal and integrates faith into the poor's daily life.³⁶²

The socio-political challenge posed by the poor's lack of community flows from a belief that community among the poor can become a force for conscientization, resistance and social change. Without community the poor are seen as unaware of their reality and powerless in the face of it. They are caught in a dialectic of oppression-liberation where even popular organizations which struggle for liberation often adopt the same methods and rationality as their oppressors. In this situation, community is viewed as having potential socio-political power which allows for the conscientization of the poor, the formation of new social relationships, a place for resistance, and a source of unified action for social change.³⁶³

Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 10-12. CLAR, "Plan Global de la CLAR 1976," p. 49-50.

360 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 2, 10-12. R. Muñoz, "Criterios teológico-pastorales de evangelización," p. 34-38. Cf. ch. 6.

361 Cf. p. 66, 97.

362 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 58-59. J. Maríns, "Desafío a la misión evangelizadora," p. 86-92. C. de Lora, "Medellín y la catequesis," p. 63-75. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 58-62, 90-92.

363 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 20-24, 50-52. Idem, *Vida religiosa... Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 37. M. Agudelo, "Colaboración entre los religiosos de América Latina," p. 5-6. C. Palmés, "La CLAR: Un signo de esperanza [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití]," p. 7. Idem, "Informe del presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 7. "Para interiorizar y vivir la razón de ser de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 12:4 (abril 1974): 3. C. de Lora, "Medellín y la catequesis," p. 63-75.

Church of the Poor

Yet an experience of community alone is insufficient for Latin America. Instead, a liberating evangelization is seen as facing the challenge of creating a Church of the Poor. Such a church would make the poor the center of the ecclesial life, spirituality, perspective on reality and evangelization. Within CLAR discussions two reasons are given for the necessity of a Church of the Poor.

A first reason flows from the previously seen view that the Church,³⁶⁴ both its members and its structure, has been affected by the structures of dependency. The solution to this situation is seen as not laying in greater efforts to include the poor into existing ecclesial structures and evangelization. Such an approach would treat the poor as a marginal group, reflecting the sociological perspective of marginality, with no distinctive culture. Instead, what is seen as necessary is a Church which recognizes the poor's culture and assists their liberation. The Church must therefore make a shift in order to re-root its life, identity and evangelization among the poor.³⁶⁵

A second and related reason views the construction of the Church of the Poor as necessary for the improvement of the Church's public witness. The Church in order to be a sacrament of God has to witness the dignity and equality of all Christians. In the context of Latin America, this public witness requires an affirmation by the Church of the poor's rights. In order to make this affirmation a Church of the Poor is necessary.³⁶⁶

Faith in the context of Latin America

The context of Latin America presents a special challenge for evangelization because of its history. While Latin America is overwhelmingly Catholic, it is seen as needing evangelization because the majority of the people have only rudimentary formation and understanding of their faith. This situation is partially the result of an incomplete initial evangelization of Latin America but also the result of a scarcity of priests and pastoral workers to provide catechesis.³⁶⁷

Coupled to lack of formation is the distortion of central beliefs of Christianity within Latin America. This distortion can take many forms. For some, Christianity is seen in a dualistic manner, separating one's faith from daily life. Another form of distortion results from the manipulation of Christianity to legitimate social injustice. In this way, God and Jesus are portrayed as defenders of the *status quo*.³⁶⁸

364 Cf p. 118-120.

365 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 44, 93-94. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 62-64.

366 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 50-51. Idem, *Vida religiosa...Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 25-27. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 30-31. The first two of the above-mentioned books appear in 1976, when the theme Church of the poor first enters CLAR discussions.

367 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 85-109. Cf. p. 29.

368 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 22-25.

There is also within CLAR discussions a recognition that the Latin American context is complex for any presentation of the faith by a liberating evangelization. Even among the poor differences are seen between residents of the large urban areas and the rural campesinos. Additionally, within this context, religious discover that some social groups, such as workers and women, are difficult to reach and receive little attention from the Church.³⁶⁹

Popular religion

Religious in their contacts with the poor discover the complex nature of popular religion.³⁷⁰ They try to understand popular religion's origins as well as how it challenges a liberating evangelization.

There appear in CLAR discussions two different understandings of popular religion's origins in Latin America. A first approach sees popular religion as a product of an incomplete initial evangelization of Latin America. Spanish and Portuguese missionaries brought the Gospel and also their national forms of popular devotions, which they taught to the Indians. Because of insufficient catechesis these devotions gradually acquire a central place in the Indian's religiosity, blending with many pre-Christian beliefs and rituals. With the passage of time this popular religion becomes accepted by most Indian peoples as well as the *mestizos*.³⁷¹

A second approach comes from the CLAR theological team who understands Latin American popular religion as a form of resistance to the initial evangelization. While the Indians were baptized, many retained their own religious systems and rituals, though blending these with Christianity. This, for the CLAR theologians, is not seen as a result of an incomplete evangelization but a conscious resistance on the part of the Indians who sought to preserve their own culture and religion in the face of the colonial aggression. These systems and rituals are likewise later passed over to the *mestizo* culture, becoming the popular religion of Latin America.³⁷²

Yet the challenge of popular religion lies not in its past but in the present where it transmits incomplete Christian doctrine and is often a barrier to the poor's liberation. Popular religion is seen as having a symbolic universe which differs

369 V. Moreira da Silva, "La mujer en el Documento de Consulta," p. 51-62. S. Galilea, "Evangelización y mundo obrero," in *Evangelización en América Latina en torno a Puebla*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 37 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1978): 43-50. Idem, *Pastoral popular y urbana*, p. 24-35.

370 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 22-25. CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 913. R. Muñoz and R. Antoncich, "El futuro de la vida religiosa," p. 22. While the focus is almost exclusively on the poor's popular religion, mention is also made of the Cursillos and charismatic renewal groups. These, while not receiving much attention, are judged as elitist and without concern for social justice issues.

371 S. Galilea, *Pastoral popular y urbana*, p. 17-20, 38-41.

372 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 26-34. Idem, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 908.

from traditional Catholicism. While Jesus, Mary and the saints figure prominent in popular religiosity, these are given understandings which clash with accepted Christian doctrine and at times appear almost magical. Popular religion also presents an incomplete view of the relationship between the human person, God and nature. Rather than seeing God as a liberator and in love with creation, popular religion often portrays a remote God who is distant and leaves people alone to cope with forces of nature. A liberating evangelization is thus challenged to present Christian doctrine of the Jesus, Mary, the saints and God in a way which allows for new relationships with God, nature and other people.³⁷³

A second and related challenge from popular religion is that it is often perceived as a barrier to the poor's liberation. Through beliefs and rituals, the poor acquire a view of themselves as powerless victims, which reinforces their oppression and prevents action for social change. Added to this is the fact that popular religion is seen as frequently manipulated by the social elites in order to keep the poor docile and powerless.³⁷⁴

Finally in spite of being doctrinally incomplete and a barrier to liberation, popular religion is seen as offering great promise. For hidden within its understandings and rituals are the 'seeds of the Word' which need discovery, purification and clarification for the people. These 'seeds of the Word' are viewed as a basis for a new Latin American form of Catholicism and a potential source of strength for the poor in their struggle for liberation. Thus while popular religion represents a challenge for liberating evangelization, it also offers hope.³⁷⁵

7.3 Vision for a liberating evangelization

In order to respond to these challenges, certain elements are considered as essential for a liberating evangelization. Together these provide a vision of a liberating evangelization for Latin America.

Equality of the People of God in the Church's evangelization

CLAR's focus on the People of God, where all Christians are the recipients of charisms from the Spirit, leads to a stress on the common Christian duty of all, lay and cleric, to participate as equals in the Church's evangelization.³⁷⁶ A liber-

373 S. Galilea, *Pastoral popular y urbana*, p. 76-83. Idem, "Entre Medellín y la III Conferencia," p. 20. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 908.

374 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 33. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 100.

375 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 63-64. J. Maríns, "Desafío a la misión evangelizadora," p. 90-91. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 10-11. S. Galilea, *Pastoral popular y urbana*, p. 83. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 113-118.

376 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 10-12. Idem, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 67-70.

ating evangelization should, therefore, cooperate with the laity and empower them for the fulfillment of their role in the Church's work of evangelization.³⁷⁷

The evangelization of religious is also affected by this stress on the equality of all Christians. In the past the participation by religious in political activity was forbidden as an intrusion into an area where the laity was thought most competent. But for CLAR, the equality of all Christians in the Church's evangelization changes this. Religious, along with the laity, share a common duty to evangelize which includes the construction on the Kingdom in history. A part of the Kingdom's construction involves political actions, and therefore religious cannot be *a priori* barred from participation in political activities.

Yet while religious are seen as able to participate in political activity as a part of a liberating evangelization, the issue is filled with a lack of clarity about what, in fact, is considered a political activity. *Dimensión política* attempts to bring clarity to this issue and sees three different types of political activity: actions for a society's common good, actions for justice (e.g. strikes and demonstrations), and partisan political actions³⁷⁸. For *Dimensión política*, participation by religious in the first two forms of actions is acceptable. However, as a general rule religious should abstain from partisan political activity, since such action is seen as potentially weakening a religious' ability to witness the Kingdom. But this general rule is not a complete rejection of partisan political activity. Instead, *Dimensión política* states that any decision by a religious to support a political party should be analyzed in relation to the specific situation: "one is unable to place a limit *a priori*. In each situation the limit is given by the spirit of the Beatitudes."³⁷⁹

After *Dimensión política* there is little discussion within CLAR literature on political activity by religious.³⁸⁰ Nonetheless, *Dimensión política*'s distinction between three different forms of political activity later appears in an article by Ronaldo

377 C. Palmés, "Informe del Presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 2-5. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina-Aporte para Puebla," p. 2.

378 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Dimensión política... Resultado de la consulta a la jerarquía," esp. 5-6, 11-12, 15, 24, 32. CELAM and CRIS view this distinction between three forms of political action as vague and impractical. They further state political activity by religious clashes with the Second Vatican Council.

379 CLAR, *Dimensión política*, p. 17, 2, 10-11. Quote from p. 17; ("...no puede ponerse un límite a priori. En cada situación el límite está dado por el espíritu de la bienaventuranza"). The reference to the Beatitudes probably refers to LG 31.

380 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 70. This report from the 1979 General Assembly mentions the conflicts which surround partisan political action by religious. Again it does not deny such a role for religious but gives three criteria for such action: a) how a religious congregation's pastoral works are linked with social elites, b) the needs of the situation and how political action would affect the public witness of religious, and c) Pope John Paul II's warning that religious should not confuse their religious vocation with political leadership.

Muñoz.³⁸¹ Similarly, religious continue to see themselves as sharing an equality with the laity in the Church's work of evangelization.³⁸²

Creation of the Church of the Poor

Latin America is seen as needing a Church of the Poor. For CLAR there are two structures of liberating evangelization which jointly are working for construction of the Church of the Poor: the *CEBS* and the *comunidades insertas*.

The *CEBS* allow for a form of evangelization which is communal, catechetical, socio-politically relevant, and rooted amongst the poor.

The *CEBS* are viewed as offering a form of evangelization which is communal. Rather than parishes, which are large and allow little personal contact between religious and the poor, the *CEBS* provide a milieu in which relationships and dialogue within the group is valued. Furthermore all members of a *CEB* are treated equally with rights and duties to the group.

Within the *CEBS* the poor study and reflect on the Bible in relationship to their daily life and traditional spirituality. Thus members of the *CEBS* develop a critical perspective towards their popular religion and discover new understandings of God and Jesus. The *CEBS* also allow members to make a clear link between faith and praxis. Reflecting upon the Bible leads to actions by the members of the *CEB* for communal improvement and social change.

The *CEBS* also have a socio-political importance as a place where the poor are conscientized and receive an experience of community. Within the *CEBS* conscientization is seen as a major priority, giving the poor a critical view of reality which leads to various political actions for the advancement of their liberation. The *CEBS* build a community where the poor can discover his/her identity free from the taint of the existing social structures.

Finally, the *CEBS* allow religious to help root the Church among the poor. Within the *CEBS*, religious come into contact with the life, culture and spirituality of the poor. In a tangible and visible way, religious through participation in the *CEBS* demonstrate a desire to shift their lives and the entire Church away from an alliance with the social elite towards the poor. This results in a reversal as the social elites are no longer the focus of the evangelization by religious. Instead, a

381 R. Muñoz, "Criterios teológico-pastorales de evangelización," p. 40-42.

382 C. Palmés, "Informe del presidente [VI Asamblea General, Venezuela]," p. 3-5. At the Sixth CLAR General Assembly, President Palmés defends CLAR (and its right to publish its studies) against charges that it is becoming a rival to CELAM. He does so by stating that religious life has rights and duties which CLAR is only trying to fulfill. It is interesting to note how Palmés uses the documents from the Second Vatican Council. There is no reference to *Perfectae Caritatis* and *Christus Dominus* is cited only twice (cd 11; 15; 17). Sixteen sections from *Lumen Gentium* are mentioned, though only one is from Chapter VI (LG 45), which deals with religious life. The majority of the citations come from LG Chapter II (The People of God) and LG Chapter IV (The Laity). Finally, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* is referred to five times.

liberating evangelization begins with the poor and has their perspective as a reference point for all action.³⁸³

The Church of the Poor is also being shaped by the religious who live in the *comunidades insertas*. Living among the poor, inserted religious act as 'ferments in the mass' encouraging the poor to form *CEBs* and organizations to advance the liberation. The *comunidades insertas* spark the imagination of the people that a communal Church of the Poor is possible. For not only do religious begin many *CEBs* but they become active and equal participants in them, witnessing to the poor a form of Church in which there is no inequality between the poor and religious. But the *comunidades insertas* also active as inserted religious join and participate in different actions in support of the poor's liberation. For the *comunidades insertas* a liberating evangelization includes active support for the poor's socio-political liberation.³⁸⁴

Liberating pedagogy

A large number of Latin American religious are involved in education as a principal form of evangelization activity.³⁸⁵ As a part of a liberating evangelization, a new pedagogy is seen as necessary to break in several ways with traditional forms of education.

A first difference between a liberating pedagogy and traditional education is the relationship with the political. For a liberating pedagogy, education is unable to be politically neutral, as traditional education claims, but is a part of the Latin American reality of social conflict. Within society, education is a principal means for socialization and in Latin America has been a transmitter of the dominant ideology, which legitimates existing socio-political order. A liberating pedagogy reverses this, allowing education to become a force for conscientization and social change rather than preservation of the *status quo*.³⁸⁶

383 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 51-54, 110-111. Idem, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 919-922. S. Galilea, "Entre Medellín y la III Conferencia," p. 18-20. Idem, *Pastoral popular y urbana*, p. 29-31, 80-83. L. Boff, "Maria, mujer profeta y liberadora," in *Evangelización en América Latina en torno a Puebla*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 37 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1978): 28-42.

384 C. Palmés and M. Agudelo, "El religioso del futuro está naciendo," p. 4-5. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Tendencias proféticas*, p. 31. Idem, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 97, 110-111. Idem, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 55-56. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 58-59, 66-70. C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad*, p. 52-53.

385 Cf. p. 62. For this reason, it is rather surprising how little attention education receives in CLAR discussions.

386 J.R. Vaccaro, "Un nuevo proceso de consulta sobre un tema candente: Vale la pena ser religioso docente," *Boletín CLAR* 12:4 (abril 1974): 2, 8. IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 34-37; (The famous Brazilian educator Paolo Freire is mentioned).

A liberating pedagogy also breaks with traditional education through fashioning a new relationship between teacher and student. Democracy and equality are highlighted by a liberating pedagogy and students are seen as in a relationship of partnership with teachers in the search for knowledge.

Learning for a liberating pedagogy is not the memorization of facts but reflection on experience. A liberating pedagogy stresses that students are active agents in society who can work for its betterment and that what they learn in the classroom should be coupled by what knowledge obtained from reflection on practical experiences. Additionally reflection on action and experiences gives students new insights into reality as well as leading to new forms of action.³⁸⁷

For religious, a liberating pedagogy must bring changes to their educational institutions and expand their outreach to the poor. Within existing educational institutions, this demands a change of the curriculum and methodology for the conscientization so that students form new relationships with teachers, other students and their own experiences. Among the poor a liberating pedagogy flows from daily life, encouraging conscientization and actions for liberation. In order to more fully reach the poor, a liberating pedagogy cooperates with popular organizations in the education and formation of potential leaders.³⁸⁸

Option for the poor – criterion for evangelization

Although before Puebla not a major source of discussion, the option for the poor is viewed as the criterion for the evaluation of evangelization. Through fidelity to the option to the poor, viewed as having biblical and Christological roots, the evangelization of religious can be judged to see if it is, in fact, liberating.

As a criterion for evangelization the option for the poor requires flexibility from religious. In order to serve the poor, religious need an openness to new forms of service which will advance liberation and the creation of new social structures. The option also requires that religious be flexible in understanding the relationship between their foundational charisms and evangelization. Evangelization is seen as a response to contemporary reality not the past and therefore no charism of the founders can limit a religious congregation to one specific form of evangelization, such as in education or health.³⁸⁹

The option for the poor also leads religious to reject and abandon existing forms of evangelization which do not further the poor's liberation. An evangelization based upon assistentialism, merely giving help to meet the poor's immediate needs, is rejected as incompatible with an evangelization which seeks to contribute

387 IPLA, *Información teológica y pastoral*, p. 34-37.

388 CLAR, *El religioso educador*, p. 36-41, 58-66. This is a CLAR study approved by the 1975 CLAR General Board Meeting (Haiti). Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina – Aporte para Puebla," p. 2-4.

389 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 44-45, 65-68, 81-87, 105. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "CLAR analiza documento de Puebla," p. 921.

to liberation. Likewise, service by religious in educational and health care institutions which only serve the social elite are seen as needing critical review. If unable to serve the poor and advance their liberation then these institutions should be abandoned.³⁹⁰

Finally, sociology is seen as a tool which allows the scientific evaluation of evangelization. Through social analysis religious learn if their evangelization, in fact, serves the poor and thus conforms to the option for the poor. Social analysis can also enlighten religious as to which sociological perspective (i.e. developmentalism, marginality or dependency) their evangelization is based. This is important because each of these three sociological perspectives leads to a different form of praxis in evangelization. For an evangelizing praxis which accords to the option for the poor, the dependency perspective, stressing the need for liberation, is seen as necessary.³⁹¹

Poverty witness of religious

A materially poor lifestyle by religious was previously seen as important,³⁹² and now is viewed as essential for a liberating evangelization.

A poor lifestyle enables religious to enter into the poor's world. Through the acceptance of material poverty religious personally experience the deprivation which the poor suffer and enter more fully into their daily life. In this way religious develop an understanding for the poor and can shape an evangelization which is truly liberating.³⁹³

The acceptance of material poverty further allows religious to also enter into the poor's view of reality and epistemology. Religious communities who live in material poverty accept the limits of the poor and in so doing make an epistemological shift. Instead of seeing possessions and knowledge as forms of power for domination, these become seen, through accepting the poor's perspective, as tools for communion and liberation.³⁹⁴

Religious who live material poverty are also seen as recovering a lost freedom for evangelization. As members in Latin American society, religious have had their views about social reality molded by the dominant ideology and "the social structure in which we move sometimes conditions our prophetic action preventing

390 "Cincuenta superiores hablan," p. 7. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 48. Idem, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 42-43.

391 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 42-44.

392 Cf. p. 69.

393 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 16-21.

394 N. Zevallos, *Apuntes para una antropología liberadora*, p. 106-115. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa...a partir de Medellín*, p. 39. Idem, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 109. Echoes of this notion, less explicit than by Brother Zevallos, can be found in various discussions in which a poor lifestyle by religious is seen as a rejection of domination – a concept not normally associated with evangelical poverty.

true liberty of spirit....”³⁹⁵ Through a lifestyle of poverty, religious can free themselves and their evangelization from the dominant ideology.³⁹⁶

Finally, religious demonstrate by a materially poor lifestyle a unity between their life (*ser*) and evangelization (*hacer*). By living in poverty, religious refuse to let possessions become a barrier between themselves and the poor. They accept poverty as a means for the establishment of a broken communion with the poor and a concrete expression of solidarity with them. In this way religious show a unity between their life and an evangelization which strives for liberation.³⁹⁷ This unity of the religious’ life and evangelization is seen as eliminating a tension between the observance of evangelical poverty and efficiency in evangelization.³⁹⁸ The desire for efficiency in many pastoral institutions is judged as a reflection of a modern capitalistic mentality, which values productivity over all else. Seeing a unity between life and evangelization, religious base their internal life as well as their evangelization upon the need for a clear witness of poverty and action for communion with the poor.³⁹⁹

Message of liberation-Bible and the social reality

A liberating evangelization uses the Bible as a source for an evangelizing message which links faith to daily life and challenges ideological manipulations of Christianity.

In the *CEBS*, the poor use their daily life as a starting point for the interpretation of the Bible. When the Bible is read at *CEB* meetings, the poor compare and associate the biblical stories with their own experience as workers, farmers, housewives or being unemployed. From this, new insights arise about God and Jesus which flow from the poor themselves. In this way, the Bible becomes an important link between faith and daily life.

The Bible also becomes for the *CEBS* a mirror against which the Latin American socio-political reality can be seen and judged. In biblical stories, especially from the Old Testament, the poor discover situations of oppression and poverty analogous to their own. They discover that God is not a passive witness to oppression but favors the poor and their liberation. This recognition allows the poor to clearly see that the current Latin American reality of oppression is condemned by God.

395 “Cincuenta superiores hablan,” p. 5, (“la estructura social en que nos movemos que en determinadas ocasiones condiciona nuestra acción profética impidiéndonos la verdadera libertad de espíritu.”)

396 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, p. 20-21. Frei Betto, “Exigencias de la conversión cristiana,” p. 53-58.

397 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa a partir de Medellín*, p. 33, 43-44. R. Antoncich, “Carisma institucional y Pastoral de Conjunto,” p. 57. C. Palmes, “La CLAR. Un signo de esperanza [XIV Junta Directiva, Haití],” p. 7. J. H. Pico, “Renovación,” p. 4-5. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 64-68.

398 Cf. p. 32, 69-70.

399 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa a partir de Medellín*, p. 43-44.

Finally, the Bible within the *CEBS* allows for the Christian message to be stripped of its past ideological manipulations. By discovering God's preference for the poor, the Bible can no longer be used to legitimate the social *status quo*. Similarly, no longer can Jesus and God be portrayed as defenders of order and law. Instead, God favors the poor and is leading them to liberation. This realization gives the poor a hope that God is with them in their struggle for liberation.⁴⁰⁰

400 C. de Lora, "Medellín y la catequesis," p. 64-75. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Vida religiosa... Sus grandes líneas de búsqueda*, p. 31-35. C. Maccise, *Nueva espiritualidad*, p. 52-59. CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana*, p. 60.

Part III

Intermezzo.

Creating new communities

Introduction

The evolution of CLAR's reflections has been traced from 1966 until 1979. In this short period of thirteen years there was a growing realization that the renewal of religious life and evangelization could only be accomplished through fashioning a new relationship with the socio-political and cultural reality of Latin America. With the discovery of dependency as a perspective to view the Latin American reality, religious realized that they were, in fact, allied with social structures that preserve an unjust *status quo*. Any renewal of religious life would have to address this alliance since it affected the internal life and external witness of religious in Latin America. For CLAR, renewal of religious life and a more contextually appropriate evangelization could only begin when religious break with this alliance and fashion a new relationship with the Latin American reality. And this new relationship demanded a shift from support for the *status quo* to active participation in the poor's liberation. Through this support, religious life could break past alliances with unjust social structures, renew internal life structures and forge an evangelization appropriate to the needs of Latin America.

As a result of evolving reflections on the religious life and evangelization, CLAR just prior to Puebla focused its attention on a particular form of religious community, the *comunidad inserta*. The *comunidades insertas* served as an important starting point for the reflections in one CLAR study, *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*. More importantly, the *comunidades insertas* were increasingly identified as a concrete religious community structure which allowed religious to forge this desired new relationship to the Latin American reality through support for the poor's liberation.

Part III represents a temporary break in the evolution of CLAR's theological reflections on religious life and its relation to evangelization. With CLAR's increasing attention for the *comunidades insertas*, it becomes necessary to look more carefully at this form of religious community. Part III does precisely that, namely a clear analysis of the *comunidades insertas* with special attention to the form favored by CLAR.

For this analysis of the *comunidades insertas*, the scope of this study must be broadened beyond CLAR's literature and internal discussions. CLAR is an advocate of the spread of the *comunidades insertas* and its support, as later chapters will show, increases after Puebla. Through this advocacy, CLAR offers a forum for discussions about the *comunidades insertas*. Yet several problems arise if one uses

only CLAR as a resource for the analysis of the *comunidades insertas*. One problem is that CLAR supports one particular stream of *comunidad inserta*, which this study names liberative. In doing so, CLAR gives very little attention to the various other streams of *comunidades insertas* which have different understandings of their life among the poor. CLAR, in fact, rarely acknowledges this variety and tends to see all *comunidades insertas* as being versions of the liberative stream. A further problem is that within CLAR there is little discussion about the specific evolution from small communities to the liberative *comunidades insertas*. While this evolution is mentioned, details about it are not discussed. Finally, though CLAR often refers to the tensions which surround the *comunidades insertas*, no analysis is ever made of these to reveal which are the result of the liberative *comunidades insertas*' unique status.

Therefore in order to overcome these problems, Part III expands the scope of this study through the use of resources beyond CLAR. This use enables a clear vision of the different streams of *comunidades insertas* found in Latin America. Each of these streams, while sharing certain general characteristics, has different understanding of the life among the poor and the limits of evangelization by religious. The use of resources outside of CLAR also permits a clear presentation of the evolution of the liberative stream of *comunidad inserta* as well as highlighting how its unique status results in tensions.

The majority of these non-CLAR resources comes from Brazil. This is not coincidental since Brazil is the birthplace of the *comunidades insertas* and where they have been most seriously studied by religious. Yet, this in no way means that it is the only Latin American nation with *comunidades insertas*. Reports from other national religious conferences make clear that, while Brazil remains the first and principal location for the *comunidades insertas*, there are substantial numbers in other Latin America nations. Nor is the evolution from small communities to liberative *comunidades insertas*, mentioned by many Brazilian theologians, unique to that country. This evolution is also commented upon by religious in other parts of Latin America.¹

Part III is divided into two chapters which explore the *comunidades insertas*, a cornerstone of CLAR's efforts to build a Church of the Poor.

Chapter 8 identifies four broad streams of *comunidades insertas*. The term stream is intentionally chosen as a metaphor for this form of religious community. A stream can be described and its common elements identified (e.g. water, size, movement), yet no two streams are identical. One stream may be wide and cut a clear line across the landscape while another is narrow and meanders seemingly without end. One stream may be rapid with treacherous undertows while another gently glides to its destination. But within the banks of every stream exists a

1 CLAR, *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR. Guatemala, abril 13-23 de 1985* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1985): 236, 307, 333. Three national conferences of Argentina, Mexico and Puerto Rico mention a development from small communities to *comunidades insertas* in their reports to the Ninth CLAR General Assembly.

variety of life forms. So it is with the *comunidades insertas*. This chapter mentions four streams of *comunidades insertas*, which share common elements yet are not identical. And while representatives of each stream are briefly discussed, these should not be viewed as exhaustive. Rather, within the general perspectives of each stream a variety of religious community life forms can exist.

After identifying these streams Chapter 9 highlights the traits which distinguish the liberative *comunidades insertas* from the other streams. One of these traits which receives special attention is the relationship between the liberative *comunidades insertas* and the *CEBS*. The *CEBS* are extremely important for inserted religious who view them as enabling their evangelization among the poor and furthermore providing an impetus to religious life renewal, especially for women religious. After an analysis of these common traits, Chapter 9 analyzes certain tensions which flow from the unique status of the liberative *comunidades insertas*. A review of these tensions is important for several reasons. First, they provide an interesting background from which the post-Puebla reflections of CLAR can be seen. Second, and as importantly, just as the small communities highlight the contradictions of traditional religious life among the poor, so the liberative *comunidad inserta* highlights the deficiencies of its attempt to combine new insights into religious life and praxis within existing religious congregations.

8 Insertion and liberation. The growth towards a Latin American *comunidad inserta*

8.0 Introduction

Previous discussions have shown CLAR's search for a new form of religious community structure. This search began soon after the Second Vatican Council and initially awakened interest in the small communities (*pequenas comunidades*). This interest eventually was seen as misplaced and CLAR shifted its attention towards the *comunidades insertas*.

This chapter analyzes the *comunidades insertas* with special attention to the liberative form which CLAR eventually endorses. Through this analysis it will become clear how the *comunidades insertas* differ from traditional religious community forms as well as the small communities (*pequenas comunidades*).

Comunidad inserta – definition?

Before analyzing the various streams of *comunidades insertas*, clarity is necessary about what is, in fact, a *comunidad inserta*. Is it possible to give a clear definition of this form of religious community and to show how it is unique? This question is difficult to answer in the face of two problems which surround any analysis of the *comunidades insertas*, one terminological and the other analytical. Though neither of these problems are insurmountable, they should be acknowledged.

A first problem is terminological. While this form of religious community is usually referred to as *comunidades insertas*, other terms are also used. Most problematic is that the *comunidades insertas* are sometimes referred to as small communities (*pequenas comunidades*).² The *comuniades insertas* usually have no more than five members and, in fact, are a 'small community' but the use of these two terms interchangeably can cause confusion. The reason for this is that in Latin America the small communities refer to a very different religious community structure and one which eventually evolves to the *comunidad inserta*.

2 *Caminhada das pequenas comunidades. Vida religiosa inserida. I Encontro das Pequenas Comunidades do NE-II-Recife* (Recife, 1982). G. Pastor, "Comunidades de base e grupos pequenos de vida religiosa," *Grande Sinal* 26 (1972): 281-297. The term 'small community' sometimes refers to the *CEBs*, though a close reading of the texts prevents any possible confusion. Finally, in Brazil *comunidades insertas* are sometimes referred to as *grupos religiosos inseridas* (*GRIS*).

This chapter retains the term *comunidades insertas* to describe this form of religious community since it is also CLAR's choice. Through careful analysis of the resources, it is possible to determine whether a specific article or book refers to a *comunidad inserta* or a small community, regardless of the terminology used.³

A second problem is analytical and goes to the heart of the *comunidades insertas* project. The *comunidades insertas* are based upon a recognition that religious communities need to incarnate themselves in the social, cultural and religious context in which they live. Unlike traditional religious communities this incarnation is viewed not in static terms but as an ongoing process in relation to an ever-changing reality.

This recognition, as Carlos Palacio states, makes it impossible to define these communities in a clear cut, deductive manner because they are inductive, ever striving to mold themselves, their understanding of religious life and evangelization to a specific context.⁴

The inductive nature of the *comunidades insertas* is also a concern for CLAR theologians who analyze them. Ricardo Antoncich, a member of the CLAR theological team, addresses a 1986 gathering of CLAR and CRB theologians. He wonders where theologians should begin an analysis of the *comunidades insertas*. Should they start with the social reality of the poor (as the communities themselves do) and show the inter-relationship between the religious and the poor's reality. Or should an analysis use as a beginning point the reflections of the inserted religious. While this approach is easier than the first, it also has a distinct disadvantage of being a second level reflection, involving theologians reflecting upon the reflections by inserted religious. Antoncich settles for the second approach as the most appropriate for CLAR since it can provide useful insights for a re-interpretation of religious life from insertion among the poor. While settling for this approach, Antoncich, nonetheless, states that perhaps for the *comunidades insertas* a narrative form of theological reflection should be given priority.⁵

The problem which the *comunidades insertas* pose for analysis can be met by heeding the observations of Palacio and Antoncich. While a fixed definition is not possible for the *comunidades insertas*, this does not mean that there are no common traits. This chapter presents the common traits which not only link all the streams of insertion but also reveal a contrast with more traditional forms of

3 As mentioned in the Introduction, this study retains the Spanish word for these communities in order to avoid confusion with the 'small communities' as well as any common misunderstandings about the *comunidades insertas*. J. Sariego, "Inserción y carisma de la Compañía," *Diakonia*, vol. 57 (marzo 1991): 61. The term 'insertion' probably comes from France where it was used by the worker-priest movement.

4 C. Palacio, "Reflexiones teológicas en torno a la inserción," *Boletín CLAR* 23:7-8 (julio-agosto 1985): 3-7.

5 R. Antoncich, "La inserción de la vida religiosa como desafío para la reflexión teológica," *CRB-CLAR Encontro Equipe 1986* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1986). Mimeo.

religious life. Antoncich presents a tougher analytical issue. Yet this chapter follows his choice (CLAR's as well), using reflections on the *comunidades insertas* which are made by inserted religious as well as theologians.

8.1 Common traits of the *comunidades insertas*

There are certain common traits which all the various streams of *comunidades insertas* share: material poverty, the Incarnation as a model for religious life, the importance of geographical location, a desire for equality with the poor, and the acceptance of life in an hostile environment. Through stressing these traits *comunidades insertas* differ from other forms of religious life.

Witness of material poverty by a religious community

All *comunidades insertas* stress the importance of the public witness of material poverty by the community. For inserted religious a community needs to embrace material poverty in its lifestyle and evangelization. Underlying this is an understanding that spiritual poverty is inseparable from material poverty by religious.

While stressing the witness of material poverty, this does not mean that each *comunidad inserta* has an identical understanding of it. In fact, there are a variety of interpretations of the poverty witness. Some communities view their material poverty in a contemplative sense, allowing a religious to unite themselves with Jesus of Nazareth. Religious in this manner understand poverty as permitting a prayerful presence of God among the poor. Other *comunidades insertas* link their poverty witness to evangelization of the poor. From this perspective, the material poverty of a religious community has an efficacy in evangelization among the poor. Finally, material poverty by religious is viewed as a sociological necessity. From this perspective, religious accept material poverty in order to conform to social conditions of the poor. This conformity allows religious to enter the world of the poor (or the worker), evangelize, and provide a eschatological witness in relation to the dominant society.⁶

The Incarnation as a model

For the *comunidades insertas*, the Incarnation is not a mere historical fact but is a model in two ways for religious communities. The Incarnation first of all reveals a poor Jesus. Through His birth and life, Jesus chose a life of poverty and this choice demonstrates to inserted religious a concrete model for how they should live and evangelize. The material poverty of the *comunidades insertas* is a consequence of the desire to follow Jesus.

The Incarnation also models, for the *comunidades insertas*, how a religious community should relate to specific socio-cultural contexts. Inserted religious see

6 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización. Seguidores de Jesús* (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 1993): 82-86, 127-134, 199-202, 231. V.M. Martínez, "La inserción: Su significado y alcance," *Teologica Xaveriana*, no. 86-87 (enero-junio 1988): 92-97.

how God incarnated Self in human history. For the *comunidades insertas*, this Incarnation demands that inserted religious likewise incarnate themselves among the poor.⁷

Once again while all *comunidades insertas* model their life upon the Incarnation, there are various images of Jesus, which are stressed by different streams of *comunidades insertas*. Some communities stress the hidden years of Jesus and see their life as making a silent contemplative presence among the poor. Other communities focus upon the active ministry of Jesus, identifying its insertion with the work of evangelization and/or the need for liberation of the poor. Finally, Jesus the worker is the concern of one stream of *comunidad inserta* which seeks incarnation among the working class.⁸

The importance of geographical location

The *comunidades insertas* also place great importance on the geographical location of a community. Traditionally the geographical location of a religious community, while naturally a consideration, is rarely seen as a central concern. Religious can live in a community and evangelize in another area, even far away. Underlying this is the presumption that there is no essential link between the geographical location of the religious community and its work of evangelization.

The *comunidades insertas* do not accept this presumption. They see that the geographical location of the community is an integral component of a religious community's public witness and evangelization. Thus any separation between the geographical location of the community and the area to be evangelized is detrimental.

Another aspect of this stress on geographical location is that for the *comunidades insertas* the geographical location of a community should not be determined by the past but present social reality. While some *comunidades insertas* live in cloisters or rectories, they do not automatically do so. These cloisters and rectories, though usable, are constructions designed to meet past needs of evangelization, which may or may not be appropriate in the present. Rather, inserted religious make a conscious decision to live among the poor and allow the location of their communities to be determined by present social reality. The *comunidades insertas* strive to enter and live in areas which are marginalized and

7 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 72-78, 135-141, 204-210. R. Antoncich, "Teología y espiritualidad de una opción," *Boletín CLAR* 23:6 (junio 1985): 3-10.

8 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 225-236. J.M. Guerrero, "Inserción: Una perspectiva para todos los religiosos," *Testimonio*, vol. 98 (noviembre-diciembre 1986): 6-13. S. Galilea, *La inserción de Jesús y en la misión* (Bogotá: Ediciones Paulinas, 1989). Galilea states that three periods of the Incarnation (i.e. His time in Nazareth, His public ministry, and Passion) must be a part of every *comunidad inserta*'s self-understanding and mission. There is no mention that three different understandings of insertion can arise, depending on which of these three periods is stressed by a community.

rejected by the dominant elements of a society. As a society changes so must the *comunidades insertas* be open to re-locating their communities, continuing a life among the poor.⁹

Equality of all people

Inserted religious see as a part of their life the need to enter fully into the poor's life, sufferings, and culture. They do this in order to make a public witness of the equality and brother/sisterhood of all. Through this witness of equality with the poor, *comunidades insertas* reject any form of paternalism or evangelization which places the community in a position superior to the poor.

The consequences of this witness of equality are demanding for religious. Equality with the poor demands acceptance of dire poverty in areas rampant with crime and disease. The acceptance of equality also necessitates life in small houses or shacks which limits the size of community.¹⁰

Life in a hostile environment

The *comunidades insertas* try to make a clear Christian witness with their lives and they choose to do so in areas which are hostile. Whether in Islamic lands (as the Little Brothers and Little Sisters) or in Christian countries rent by social division, the *comunidades insertas* encounter opposition and hostility. Sometimes this hostility is a consequence of past history, where Christianity is seen as joined to imperialism. At other times, the *comunidades insertas* are the target of those who view the Church as supporting the rich in a society split by class conflict. This hostility is directed at the inserted religious because they are, at least initially, viewed as representatives of Christianity and the Church.

The *comunidades insertas* accept this hostility as an important part of their life and in so doing strive to make a Christian presence which can overcome it. There are a variety of different ways in which inserted religious make a presence that overcomes this hostility. Some *comunidades insertas* make a silent presence among the poor, while others accept a more active stance which can include political activities.¹¹

9 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 228-231. C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta en los medios populares*, Colección CLAR 53 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 30.

10 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 32, 54, 118-126, 200-202. G. Barrios Velásquez, "Experiencia de inserción en una zona popular de Lima-Perú," in *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR. Guatemala, abril 13-23 de 1985* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1985): 60-61.

11 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 225-226. C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 34-35, 51-52. This trait of the *comunidades insertas* is so obvious that it is seldom commented upon directly. The Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus (i.e. 'founded' by Charles de Foucauld) initially restricted themselves to Islamic North Africa. The Prado secular institute and worker-priests live in working class areas even though they are aware that the Church is seen as opposed to the common laborer. Religious of the liberative *comunidades insertas* move into poor barrios where the Church is viewed as allied with the rich and a defender of the *status quo*.

8.2.0 Streams of insertion

The *comunidad inserta* has a long history. Yet most streams have arisen only within the last hundred years, in response to the decreased influence by the French Church among the poor and working class.¹²

This study identifies four different streams of *comunidades insertas* which are present in Latin America. Though CLAR's focus is almost exclusively upon the liberative form, there are two reasons why the other three streams of *comunidades insertas* should be reviewed.

An initial reason for analyzing all four streams of *comunidades insertas* is to appreciate the diversity which exists among the *comunidades insertas*. While they share common traits, the various streams of *comunidades insertas* understand their life and evangelization among the poor in different manners.

A second reason is that the other streams of *comunidades insertas* form an important background against which develops the Latin American liberative form of *comunidad inserta*. The liberative stream of *comunidad inserta* is a unique product of Latin America which arises in response to Medellín-Puebla and the praxis of religious. Yet the liberative *comunidad inserta* does not develop in a vacuum, for there are other streams of *comunidades insertas* active in Latin America before Medellín. These streams are known and provide an example for religious of life among the poor.

It is necessary to highlight the differences between these four streams of insertion in order to more clearly appreciate their diversity. Therefore, three of these streams are analyzed through reference to groups which are most typical of them. Thus the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, the Prado secular institute and the Jacques Loew's worker-priests are used as concrete, though not exclusive, representatives of each stream. For the fourth stream, the liberative, this form of analysis is not possible because it cuts across congregational boundaries. Instead, the liberative *comunidades insertas* are analyzed as a general class in order to locate the characteristics which link these communities and make them a separate stream of insertion.

8.2.1 Insertion for contemplative presence

This stream of *comunidad inserta* seeks a contemplative presence among the poor and the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus are clear examples of this

12 M. Habig, ed., "The Rule of 1221," in *St. Francis of Assisi. Omnibus of Sources* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973): 43-44. In Chapter 16 of the unapproved Franciscan Rule, St. Francis mentions two ways in which a friar minor can evangelize: preaching the Gospel, and the witness of a humble life among non-believers. R. Hostie, *Leven en dood van de religieuze instituten* (Utrecht: Emmaus, 1972): 288-289, 349. The fact that three streams of *comunidades insertas* (i.e. the Little Brothers and Little Sisters, the del Prado secular institute, and J. Loew's worker-priests) arise in France is not unusual in the history of religious life. Hostie shows that Italy and France are the origin of the vast majority of congregations.

approach. The Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus are two religious congregations which were founded during the 1930s in France in order to follow in the footsteps of Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916). Until World War II, both congregations restricted themselves to North Africa following Charles de Foucauld's desire for a Christian presence among Islam. However, after the war the Little Brothers and Little Sisters expand beyond North Africa when René Voillaume, Prior General, asked that communities be established as a response to increasing secularization of traditionally Catholic nations. The result is that communities of Little Brothers and Little Sisters soon thereafter spread throughout the world.¹³

The Little Brothers and Little Sisters in their insertion among the poor witness contemplation in the world without a strict monastic cloister. They place a heavy stress upon communal and personal prayer but, unlike a traditional monastery, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters do not isolate themselves from the people. On the contrary, they accept manual labor and immerse themselves in the daily life of the poor. The Little Brothers and Sisters hope that their contemplative presence can bring the poor closer to God.¹⁴

This contemplative presence by the Little Brothers and Little Sisters is modelled after the hidden years of Jesus, who worked silently for thirty years before beginning His public ministry. As Jesus made a silent presence in Nazareth, so the Little Brothers and Little Sisters do likewise in order to follow Him. And this manner of following Jesus places concrete demands upon the Little Brothers and Little Sisters. Like Jesus, they incarnate themselves fully into the life, culture and suffering of the poor. Also like Jesus, they highlight equality with the poor. This leads the Little Brothers and Little Sisters to accept manual labor and to steadfastly refuse any position which places them above the poor.¹⁵

Nonetheless, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters place very definite limits upon their contemplative presence among the poor. While they often cooperate in parochial works, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters do not accept responsibility

13 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 115-117. D. Barrat and R. Barrat, *Charles de Foucauld et la fraternité*, Maîtres Spirituels (Paris: Seuil, 1958): 8-23, 131-157. The Little Brothers were founded in 1933, and the Little Sisters in 1939 (an earlier female group, the Little Sisters of the Sacred Heart began in 1933). It is interesting to note that all three congregations claim Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) as their founder even though they were established long after his death. Father de Foucauld wanted to found a religious congregation and, in fact, wrote a rule in 1911, though no community was begun before his death. When a group of French priests, under the leadership of René Voillaume, studied this rule, they found it too impractical and detailed. Thus Voillaume established the Little Brothers based upon all the writings and insights from Charles de Foucauld, rather than strictly following his rule.

14 Hermanitos de Jesús, "Expresiones de pobreza voluntaria," *Boletín CLAR* 7:9 (septiembre 1969): 5-6.

15 "Experiencia de inculturación, Venezuela," in *CLAR XXII Junta Directiva. Haiti, 11-20 mayo 1987*, vol. 2 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1987): 238-249. Hermanitos de Jesús, "Expresiones de pobreza voluntaria," p. 5.

for a parish. Nor do the Little Brothers and Little Sisters participate in political or union activities. The reason for these limits on their presence lies in how they understand their life. Pastoral responsibility as well as active political activity are seen as forms of action which are contrary to their founding charism's call for a contemplative witness among the poor.¹⁶

The Little Brothers and Sisters have a long history of activity in Latin America. Before the Second Vatican Council there are Little Brother communities in several nations (i.e. Brazil, Peru, Chile). Furthermore, the foundress of the Little Sisters, Sister Madeleine, in 1952 goes to Brazil and begins a community among the Tapirapés Indians.¹⁷

The Little Brothers and Little Sisters model of contemplative insertion also is an inspiration for other religious in Latin America. One clear example is the Little Brothers of the Incarnation which are founded in 1976 for living Charles de Foucauld's ideals among the campesinos of Haiti.¹⁸

Yet in spite of this presence, the contemplative stream of *comunidad inserta* is rarely discussed by official CLAR studies. *Experiencia latinoamericana*, approved by the 1979 CLAR General Assembly in a discussion of the *comunidades insertas* states only that "Some of these communities are contemplative...."¹⁹ Though rarely a topic for CLAR, reflections from several Little Brothers and Little Sisters communities are presented before CLAR General Assembly and General Board meetings.²⁰

16 René V. [Voillaume], "Caros irmãosinhos. Carta de Irmão René aos Irmãozinhos de Jesus," *Convergência* 9 (1976): 111-119. Irmã Teresinha, "As Irmãzinhas de Jesus. Um traço de seu carisma," *Convergência* 9 (1976): 67-70. M. Paz, "Han dado la vida por su pueblo y están en medio de nosotros," *Paginas*, vol. 103 (junio 1990): 79-88. D. Barrat and R. Barrat, *Charles de Foucauld et la fraternité*, p. 139-145.

17 D. Barrat and R. Barrat, *Charles de Foucauld et la fraternité*, back cover. "O encontro com o outro como experiência da fé," *Convergência* 27 (1992): 23-27.

18 "Representación de las etapas de formación, Haiti. Experiencia no. 3," in *X Asamblea General de la CLAR. Cochabamba, junio 1-10 de 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988): 231-234. J.L. Gómez, M.O. Orozco, and M. Figueredo, "Experiencia de la Misioneras Aymaras. Experiencia no. 1," in *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR*, p. 177-212. The last mentioned is a report from a newly formed Bolivian congregation for Aymara girls. A nearby de Foucauld community helps the sisters with their formation and life among the Aymara.

19 CLAR, *Experiencia latinoamericana de vida religiosa*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 42 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1979): 39; ("Algunas de estas comunidades son contemplativas...").

20 "Comunidades das Irmãzinhas de Jesus. Favela de Magueira/Rio de Janeiro. Experiencia 2," in *XXI Junta Directiva de la CLAR. Buenos Aires abril 5-12, 1986* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1986): 50-53. "Experiencia de inculturación. Venezuela," p. 238-244. C. Palacio, *Reinterpretar a vida religiosa* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1991): 7, 119-126. In a recent book Palacio states that the Little Brothers and Little Sisters are the only modern religious charism which responds to deficiencies of traditional religious life. Palacio admires these de Foucauld congregations for maintaining a common charism while simultaneously giving local communities the flexibility for adaptation to different cultural contexts.

8.2.2 Insertion for evangelization

A second stream of *comunidad inserta* sees insertion among the poor as an effective means for the evangelization. Representative of this understanding is the institute of Prado, founded by Father Antoine Chevrier with a purpose of evangelizing the poor in the face of the growing challenges posed by industrialization in nineteenth century France.

The institute of Prado recognizes the value of material poverty by a religious community in any evangelization of the poor. And this material poverty is important for two reasons. First, through material poverty, a religious community can enter into the life and culture of the poor which allows an evangelization that can reach the people in their daily reality. Joined to this is a second reason for the stress on material poverty. Through a life of material poverty, the religious is strengthened spiritually, becoming more effective in his/her work of evangelization.

Jesus is also seen as the model for this stream of *comunidad inserta* but the focus is on His active ministry. Jesus is viewed as poor and combining His poverty with evangelization, bringing the Good News to all. This unity of material poverty and evangelizing activity by Jesus is a model for the del Prado secular institute in their own life.²¹

The Prado institute shares many features with the Little Brothers and Little Sisters. There is a stress on the need for equality with the poor, entrance in their life and culture and life in simple houses among the poor. Also, like the de Foucauld communities, del Prado accepts manual labor as a way to financially support the community and witness the community's desire to share the poor's life.

However, unlike the Little Brothers and Little Sisters, the Prado secular institute sees their insertion in terms of evangelization, not a contemplative presence. They are active in a diocese's pastoral and willingly accept responsibility for a parish. Parochial ministry is viewed as one means for the evangelization of the poor in accordance with their founder's charism.²² Another difference with the Little Brothers and Little Sisters is that members of Prado can actively support the poor's unions or popular organizations as a way to evangelize the poor.

21 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 51-53, 72-85. G. Pelliccia and J. G. Rocca, eds. *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1974-1988, s.v. "Prado," by G. Charvaul. Chevrier had the inspiration to begin the Prado secular institute during Christmas 1856 and it gradually took shape between then and 1865. Chevrier's group was recognized in 1924 as a society with diocesan right and in 1954 elevated to a secular institute under the Holy See (being granted full rights as a secular institute in 1959). The Sisters of Prado were also founded by Father Chevrier and are a society of religious women under simple vows.

22 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 21-86. Father Chevrier began his society for secular priests and encountered resistance from the Church who saw the practice of evangelical poverty as 'exclusively for religious' (p. 31). Del Prado was the name of the building wherein the first community lived.

The del Prado secular institute is less well known than the Little Brothers and Little Sisters, and there is little information about their presence in Latin America. However, it is known that the female branch, the Sisters of Prado have communities in Chile. This presence begins in 1961 when a group of women active in the the Catholic Action (JOC) decide to join the Sisters of Prado. In 1966 Bishop Larraín asks the Sisters of Prado to establish a community in a poor area near Talca. Eventually this presence expands to include six communities, one of which is for initial formation.²³

While this stream of insertion receives little attention, it highlights another understanding of the *comunidad inserta* which views insertion as necessary for the work for evangelization.

8.2.3 Insertion for social witness/evangelization

This stream of insertion also seeks the evangelization of the poor but joins this to a clear social witness for justice. Most representative of this stream is the worker-priest movement of Jacques Loew.

This roots of this stream of *comunidad inserta* can be traced to twentieth century France where the Church became increasingly aware of its estrangement from the working class. During World War II a seminary in Lisieux began a special program of training so that priests could evangelize the working class. In 1943 the French hierarchy permits volunteer priests to accompany French workers who are deported to German labor camps.²⁴

While this general awareness of the need to evangelize the workers is present, it was the experience of Jacques Loew who concretized in his own unique manner the concerns of the worker-priest movement and later founded a secular institute. Loew was a Dominican priest who after completion of his theological studies was sent to Marseille where he lived and worked alongside Father Lebreton, the director of the center *Economy and Humanism*.²⁵ Through Loew's work as a sociologist, he has contact with many workers, discovering first hand the gulf which separates them from the Church.

For Loew this gulf had a variety of causes. An initial cause was the image of the Church. Most workers saw the Church as opposed to their interests and favoring only the rich and powerful. Coupled to this negative image of the Church was the

23 "Experiencia de las Hermanas del Prado-Chile. Texto de Trabajo 5," in *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR. Guatemala, abril 13-23 de 1985* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1985): 54-58.

24 G. Martina, "The Historical Context in which the Idea of a New Ecumenical Council was Born," in *Vatican II: Assessment & Perspectives*, ed. R. La Tourelle, vol. 1 (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988): 23, 35.

25 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 157. P.F.C. de Andrade, *Fé e eficácia. O uso da sociologia na teologia da libertação* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1991): 36. Lebreton's center 'Economy and Humanism' made economic studies and his thinking influenced both *Gaudium et Spes* and *Populorum Progressio*.

lack of contact by religious and bishops with the workers. This led to a general ignorance by Church leaders about the workers and the conditions of their life. Finally, Loew saw the lifestyle of religious as another cause of this gulf between the workers. Living in comfortable cloisters far from the working class areas, religious were geographically remote from the poor. This distance was not just geographical but also cultural. Few workers visited religious cloisters because they felt uncomfortable in the upper class parts of the city and among the seeming wealth of the religious.²⁶

Loew decided a new approach was necessary. He moved into a working class area of Marseille and to the incredulity of the workers, accepted a position as a stevedore.

Loew chose work on the Marseille docks as a means to understand the daily life and problems of the workers. This choice led Loew to see a need for insertion in all aspects of the worker's life, culture and customs. Instead of the habit, he wore regular clothes so as not to distinguish himself from others. As Loew says, "The missionaries will avoid all that can separate them [from the workers-jk] except sin."²⁷

Loew did not, however, seek only an individual life among the poor. Rather he stressed the importance of a community in order to effectively evangelize the workers. He established pastoral teams, composed of lay and religious, at parishes. These teams guided the evangelization activity and also performed administrative duties of the parish thereby freeing the priest for manual labor in a factory.²⁸ Furthermore Loew did not see the worker-priests as restricted to the parish and factory. Rather, they also provided a social witness through action against social injustice. From his experience of life among the workers, Loew stated that France which claimed to be Christian was, in fact, pagan.²⁹ In such a situation, Loew viewed the worker-priests as a 'ferment in the mass' who would work for the improvement of the workers' condition. Thus for Loew the worker-priests should work with and support workers groups in movements for justice, even co-operating with those opposed to the Church.³⁰

The worker-priest, for Loew, was a response to the Incarnation. Through accepting manual labor, a worker-priest follows Jesus who worked as a carpenter in Nazareth. And this following of Jesus demanded material poverty and, for Loew, entrance into the working class.³¹

26 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 157-161.

27 J. Loew, *O Evangelho e o povo. Missão operária* (São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades, 1967): 127. J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 161-167.

28 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 167-171.

29 J. Loew, *O Evangelho e o povo. Missão operária*, p. 125.

30 J. Loew, *O Evangelho e o povo. Missão operária*, p. 102.

31 J.L. Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p. 156 says that for Loew: "In a certain sense, being poor and being a worker were inter-changeable terms"; ("Em cierto sentido 'ser pobre' y 'ser obrero' eran términos convertibles").

Finally, Loew originally had no intention of founding a new religious congregation. Rather, he sought to create a broad movement of religious, secular priests and laity who would dedicate themselves to the working class' evangelization and advancement. Nonetheless, in 1953 the Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes effectively abolished the worker-priests by limiting them to three hours of factory work per day. After this action, Loew continued his work with the permission of the local bishop and founded a secular institute which was in 1965 pontifically approved as the Workers Mission of Peter and Paul (MOPP).³² This social witness *comunidad inserta* stream bears much similarity to the preceding stream. Like the Prado secular institute, it arises in France and has as a central concern the evangelization of the working class. The worker-priests also accept parochial responsibility and participate actively in pastoral planning. Yet the worker priests understand their role differently and see their life of insertion in a way which combines evangelization and a clear social witness for the social advancement of the workers.

Jacques Loew visits Brazil and stays almost one year with the Dominican community at the parish of São Pedro e São Paulo in the neighborhood of Osasco. This parish is involved in workers causes and becomes an important transmitter of Catholic Action ideas in Brazil.³³

Within the CLAR literature while there is a growing concern about insertion in the work place, there appear no reflections from priest members of the MOPP.³⁴ Nonetheless, there are worker priests in Latin America and, as shall be shown, many of the ideas of Loew are echoed, though in a different manner, by the liberative form of *comunidad inserta*.³⁵

32 J L Cincunegui, *Pobreza y evangelización*, p 171 G Martina, "The Historical Context in which the Idea of a New Ecumenical Council was Born," p 23, 35. One consequence of the controversy was that two supporters of the worker-priests, M.D. Chenu and Y. Congar, faced difficulties with the hierarchy and their congregations.

33 "O Evangelho e o povo," *REB* (1967) 527 Dom M P Carvalheira, "Momentos históricos e desdobramentos da Ação Católica Brasileira," *RFB* (março 1983) 10-28 Carvalheira says that the Dominicans were influential in spreading Catholic Action throughout Brazil. Additionally, in 1968 the Brazilian government expelled Father Wauthier who was a worker-priest at the Osasco

34 This may be partially explainable in the fact that members of MOPP are not canonically considered religious and therefore do not belong to the national conferences of religious which form CLAR

35 A reflection by a member of Loew's secular institute does appear in G Neerneck, MOPP, "A inserção no mundo de trabalho Desafio à vida religiosa," *Convergência* (1984) 232-240 Bishop J Aramburu, "Sacredotes operários," *SEDOC* (setembro 1970) 341-343 This letter from Bishop João Aramburu (Buenos Aires) sets guidelines for work-priests who wish to work in his diocese M Puga, "Testigo del Evangelio desde los andamios," *Testimonio*, vol 128 (noviembre-diciembre 1991) 95-97 The last mentioned is a reflection by a diocesan priest from Chile who works as a painter. He says that he was influenced by the JOC and the example of the Little Brothers of Jesus.

8.2.4 Insertion for liberation

The fourth stream of insertion arises not in Europe but Latin America and is the focus of CLAR's interest in *comunidades insertas*. This stream of *comunidad inserta* stresses support for the liberation of the poor and arises as a result of the discovery by Latin American religious of unjust social structures and social conflict.³⁶

Support for the poor's liberation is linked to both the eschatological witness of religious and evangelization. The liberative *comunidad inserta* sees work for the advancement of the Kingdom as a part of the eschatological witness by religious. In Latin America this concretely means active support by religious for the poor's liberation from injustice and oppression. The liberative *comunidad inserta* also links support for the poor's liberation to evangelization. For this stream of insertion, evangelization fails in its responsibility to transform all aspects of human life if it ignores the injustice in the Latin American social reality. In the face of this social injustice, evangelization must preach a message of liberation and actively support the change of unjust social structures.³⁷

This support for liberation can take a variety of forms by religious communities. One form of support for liberation by inserted religious is parochial work but in a way which differs from traditional approaches. Instead of focussing on the sacramental or catechetical needs of the poor, the inserted religious shift the parish to become an active vehicle for the support of the poor's liberation. This shift results in support by a parish of popular organizations and the *CEBS*.³⁸

Work in parish is not, however, accepted by all liberative *comunidades insertas* and some refuse any connection with it. For many inserted religious the parish is viewed as inadequate to meet the evangelization needs of the poor. Furthermore, regardless of how they try to shift the focus of a parish to liberation concerns,

36 R. de Almeida Cunha, "A conversão dos religiosos," *Convergência* (1986) 89-105 C Palacio, "Reflexiones teológicas en torno a la inserción," p 3-7

37 C Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p 50-52. A.A. Rodriguez and J M Canals Casas, eds., *Dictionário teológico de la vida consagrada*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Inserción," by C. Boff.

38 CRB, "Contribuição de algumas comunidades religiosas inseridas no meio do povo," in *Seminário de estudio sobre vida religiosa inserida no meio popular. São Paulo 24-29 setembro de 1979* (Rio de Janeiro CRB, 1979): 4 This is a reflection at a national meeting for inserted religious in Brazil. "Experiencia de una vida de inserción Guachupita-Santo Domingo, R D Texto de Trabajo 5," in *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR. Guatemala, abril 13-23 1985* (Bogotá. CLAR, 1985) 90. This *comunidad inserta* in the Dominican Republic uses the parish as a base for support of various popular organizations CLAR, *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR*, p 288, 332. Considerable numbers of inserted religious work in parishes. At the 1985 CLAR General Assembly, the national conferences of El Salvador and Puerto Rico state that most *comunidades insertas* are linked to a parish. *Caminhada da pequenas comunidades*, p 33-39, 118 A Barreiro, "Pequenas comunidades Anotações sobre um encontro," *Convergência* (1975). 30 One reason for this strong presence by inserted religious in parishes is financial Through parish work, religious can earn money for the support of their community.

some religious find that the bulk of their time is spent addressing the sacramental and catechetical needs of the poor instead of in other activities, more directly concerned with the liberation of the poor. A second reason for a refusal to have ties to a parish is a desire by inserted religious for independence. Work in a parish brings the evangelization activity of religious more directly under the control of a bishop. To avoid possible conflicts, many *comunidades insertas* therefore do not accept responsibility for parishes.³⁹

A second concrete form of support for liberation is the work of providing a liberating form of education, which is aimed at helping the poor realize the need for social change. Through a liberating education, learning is not the memorization of a static body of facts but a power which can be harnessed to support transformation of the world. Additionally, the process of education becomes mutual. While inserted religious bring the poor a critical sense of reality, the poor offer their knowledge and wisdom in exchange. This relationship between teacher and student is viewed, as Clodovis Boff says, as an 'exchange of knowledges'. Finally, while the educational work of the inserted religious can be based in a school, it can also be in co-operation with a popular organization.⁴⁰

A third form of support for liberation is health care. Inserted religious offer health services to the poor in a way which not only meets basic needs but reveals structural social causes for the poor's lack of health care.

Not just the underlying structural causes but inserted religious educate the poor about health care. Instruction is given about the prevention of disease and its link

39 C. Boff, "Pequenas comunidades na congregação e diocese," in *Caminhada da pequenas comunidades. Vida religiosa inserida* (Recife: 1982): 141-143. Clodovis Boff acts as a theologian consultant for many meetings of inserted religious. He attends a 1984 gathering of the NE (Brazil) region. W. Mohn, ed., *Religião popular e vida religiosa inserida* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986): 23. Idem, *IV encontro das pequenas comunidades inseridas do Reg. NE 2-1989. Lago Sêca, Paraíba. Vida religiosa inserida e o nordestino do campo e da cidade. Encontros urbano e rural [sic?], maio 1987* Recife: CRB, 1995): 4. At this meeting, one inserted religious sums up the attitude of many towards the parish: "We want to build the Kingdom not remain in a parish"; ("Temos que construir o Reino, e não ficar na paróquia").

40 C. Boff, "Agente de pastoral e povo," *REB* (1980): 216-242. I. Gebara, "Educação popular: Sementes de um mundo novo," *Convergência* (1982): 360-365. Idem, "Vida religiosa e educação popular," *Convergência* (1984): 360-368. "Experiencia educativa popular Guadalupe," in *CLAR XXII Junta Directiva Haiti, 11-20 mayo 1987*, vol. 2 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1987): 142-158. CLAR, "Seminário sobre misión-evangelización-los religiosos," (Bogotá: CLAR, 1983): 1-6, mimeo. At this meeting the Bolivian, Peruvian and Venezuelan national conferences speak of religious working in 'Fe y Alegria' schools. These are public schools in poor areas where religious agree to assume full responsibility for instruction and administration. The government, for its part, continues funding these schools. The program is started in 1955 by Jose Maria Vetaz, SJ for schools in Venezuela. By 1983, there are over 500 'Fe y Alegria' schools throughout Latin America. Many inserted religious, especially in Bolivia, are involved in this form of education. CRB, "Seminário nacional de animação dos GRUS 26 a 30 maio de 1987 Goiânia, Go." (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1987), mimeo. This is a short reflection by a Carmelite sister community which works in a 'Fe y Alegria' school.

to improper sanitary conditions. Inserted religious also provide the poor with information on alternative forms of treatment for disease. One example is the use of herbal medicines, which in the past were well known by the poor. In some areas the inserted religious study, collect and distribute these herbal remedies. This work provides the poor with inexpensive and readily available medicines and at the same time preserves an important part of their culture.⁴¹

The support by the *comunidades insertas* can also take the form of direct political actions. Inserted religious participate: in land occupations,⁴² support for union activities and strikes,⁴³ demonstrations and public protests; and for some active support for leftist political parties.⁴⁴ While they participate in various political actions, inserted religious generally refuse a leadership role, believing that is for the poor.⁴⁵

The liberative *comunidades insertas* also look to the Incarnation as a model for their life among the poor. Along with the other streams of insertion, the liberative *comunidades insertas* see the poor Jesus, the God who chose material poverty as a way to reach humanity. Yet the life of Jesus revealed another choice. Through

41 CLAR and CRB, "Plantas medicinales en la atención primaria. Proyecto de Salud comunitaria - Casa Amarilla, Recife, Brasil," in *I Seminário latinoamericano de salud. CLAR-CRB. Agosto 25-septiembre 1 de 1988 Petrópolis, Brasil* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988): 1-8. This meeting focuses on health care by religious and one contribution deals with the promotion of traditional herbs as alternative medicine for the poor. E.R. de Oliveira, "A questão da medicina popular na cidade," in *A vida em meio à morte num país da Terceiro Mundo* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1983): 73-88. Although there is no mention of it at this meeting, religious, who gather and collect local herbs for medicinal use, come into direct contact with the popular religion of the poor. The reason for this is that the people who know about these herbs are the traditional folk healers who use them.

42 H. da Cunha, "My Experience of the Search for an Evangelizing and Liberating Mission in the Midst of a Situation of Injustice," *SEDOS Bulletin* (1985): 129-136. *Caminhada das pequenas comunidades*, p. 71-76.

43 C. la Roussière, "Vida religiosa inserida no mundo do trabalho," *Convergência* 26 (1991): 248-256. M.M. Medeiros, "A vida religiosa face ao mundo do trabalho," *Convergência* 26 (1991): 238-248.

44 M.J. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985): 175, 197-198. This is a 1982 master's thesis done by Sister Nunes on inserted communities of women religious in the São Paulo area. She notes that the women religious are active in many forms of actions and that they all have strong political opinions. Yet while some have attended meetings, no one from her sample group is an active member of a political party.

45 C. Boff, *Como trabalhar com o povo. Metodologia do trabalho popular*, 10th ed. (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1993): 97. This book is written as a short guide for religious who work with the poor. Though not exclusively for inserted religious, it stresses this form of witness. Idem "Aprofundamento dos assessores," in *IV Encontro das pequenas comunidades do Reg. NE 2-1989. Vida religiosa inserida e o nordestino do campo e da cidade. Encontros urbano e rural [sic?], maio 1987* (Recife: 1995): 22, 120. This gathering has as its theme the relationship between inserted religious and political activity. Clodovis Boff, one of the assessors, states that *Lumen Gentium* 44 allows political actions by religious. His reasoning is that since religious are not a part of the hierarchy they are more lay than clerical and therefore may be active in politics, as the laity (*LG* 31).

his life, public ministry and death, Jesus revealed God's preference for the poor and made a clear option for them. This revelation of the option for the poor leads inserted religious to mold their life around it as a concrete way to follow Jesus.⁴⁶

8.2.5 Types of liberative comunidades insertas

There are two different types of liberative *comunidades insertas* which arise in Latin America. There is little known about the first, a monastic *comunidade inserta*, and it is very uncommon. About the second type far more information is available and it is composed of religious who are members of congregations without a strict monastic cloister.⁴⁷

8.2.5.1 MONASTIC COMUNIDAD INSERTA

There is very little known about this type of the liberative *comunidade inserta* or how it historically develops. In one of the few articles about monastic *comunidades insertas*, Abbot Marcelo de Barros Souza (Brazil) states that in 1966 Brazil some monks form small monasteries in poor areas in order to have closer contact with the people.

These monasteries are involved in a variety of activities. The monks work with the *CEBs*, Bible groups and offer assistance to popular organizations. However, the monks do not participate in any form of political action whether demonstrations or support for a political party.

The chief focus of the monastic *comunidade inserta* is on the renewal of the liturgy and, in particular, the Liturgy of the Hours. For this renewal the monks rewrite the Psalms so that they are in the common vernacular of the people. The monks also incorporate traditional folk songs into the liturgy. For the monastic *comunidade inserta* this liturgical renewal is necessary in order to make the liturgy understandable for the poor as well as a source of strength in their struggle for liberation.⁴⁸

46 M.C. de Freitas, "Opção pelos pobres," in *Inserção: Novo modo de ser da vida religiosa* (Rio de Janeiro: crb, 1989): 9-27. C. Caliman, "Vida religiosa inserida nos meios populares. Uma nova forma de seguimento de Cristo hoje," in *Novo modo de ser da vida religiosa*, p. 73-85.

47 M. de Barros Souza, "Comunidades religiosas e reinserção no mundo dos pobres," *Convergência* 22 (1987): 114-119. This article is one of the few which mentions different types of *comunidades insertas*. Abbot de Souza classifies the *comunidades insertas* under two general types: contemplative and militant. Under the contemplative he places the monastic *comunidades insertas* and the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus. This study, for reasons mentioned earlier, sees these as belonging to two separate streams of insertion.

48 M. de Barros Souza, "Comunidades monásticas populares e a oração da Igreja," *Grande Sinal* 40 (setembro 1986): 491-502. M. de Barros Souza and the Centro de Estudos bíblicos, *E a vida vira oração. Rezar os salmos hoje* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1985). *Ofício divino das comunidades* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1988). J.M. Pires, "Nuestros obispos opinan sobre la vida religiosa," interview, *Boletín CLAR* 17:7 (julio 1979): 9-11. Bishop Jose Maria Pires states that his diocese has a de Foucauld inspired *comunidade inserta* and a monastic *comunidade inserta* of Benedictines.

8.2.5.2 ACTIVE RELIGIOUS COMUNIDAD INSERTA

This type of liberative *comunidad inserta* is the result of an evolution which begins with the small communities. From the experiences of some small communities, religious discover the world of the poor which is different from the dominant Latin American society. And this world is not only different but also in a conflictive relationship with other parts of the society. Through this discovery of poor's world and social conflict, religious see the inadequacy of their small communities. Building upon this knowledge, there eventually arises a new form of religious community, the liberative *comunidad inserta*.

Small communities

This study previously mentions that the small communities are a worldwide development which occurs immediately after the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁹ They are attempts to concretely fashion religious life in response to the Council's call for internal renewal and adaptation to the world.

Besides being international, the development of the small communities has another characteristic, namely it is a movement which transcends the traditional boundaries of religious congregations. The small communities appear neither under the inspiration of one person nor are they limited to a single congregation. Instead, small communities are formed by religious from different religious congregations. There are even a few small communities which are inter-congregational, composed of religious from different congregations.

The fact that the small communities develop within many religious congregations is not a coincidence. For the establishment and spread of the small communities initially receives the full support from the leadership of many religious congregations. Immediately following the Second Vatican Council, religious congregations are confronted with many challenges: declining numbers, unrest among younger members and a general uncertainty about meaning of the Vatican Council. The leadership of most congregations search for ways to achieve internal renewal and adaptation to the world and also prevent younger members from leaving religious life. Within this situation, the small communities appear as an answer. Within the small communities the renewal and adaptation of religious life can be advanced and in a way which can hopefully keep younger members from leaving religious life. Though there are some misgivings, especially in questions of internal governance, the leadership of religious congregations give widespread support to religious who form small communities.⁵⁰

49 Cf. p. 39-41.

50 "Conclusiones del encuentro de provinciales y vicarios dominicos de América del Sul," in *La vida religiosa en América Latina. Respuestas y compromisos*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 8 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1969): 14. J. de Jesús Sedano, and G. Hernandez, "La identidad dominicana cuestionado por la situación latino-americana," in *Ordenes antiguas: Respuestas nuevas*, ed. secretariado general de la CLAR, Colección CLAR 29 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1976): 83. "Primera reunión de

The support for the small communities is also echoed at Medellín where the Latin American bishops state:

"Religious communities, by virtue of their special vocation thought to witness to the poverty of Christ. We encourage those who feel themselves called to form among their members small communities, truly incarnated in the poor environment; they will be a continual call to evangelical poverty for all the People of God (*Pobreza 16*)."⁵¹

The small communities are characterized by certain definite traits which distinguish them from more traditional religious communities. These characteristics are discussed by theologians and are clearly evident in two Brazilian studies on the small communities. The first study is done by Sister Sebastina de Brito for the Brazilian Religious Conference (CRB) in 1970. Sister de Brito's study is based upon the results of a survey sent to small communities. A second study is done by Sister Margarida Serpa Coelho in 1972. Though limited to the North East of Brazil, it also offers a useful insight into the traits which bind these small communities.

– The small communities intentionally fashion community around elements which traditional religious communities view as unimportant. One example of this is the size of the community. For the small communities, the size of the community is reduced so that close interpersonal relations can develop between members. This is the reason why most small communities are composed of only three or four members.

The small communities also stress the importance of religious community's geographical location. Religious in the small communities recognize the gap between themselves and the people. In order to bridge this gap, religious decide to insert themselves more fully into social concerns and share the daily life of the people. This insertion is not viewed as possible, or at least not in the same degree, if a community lives in a traditional cloister. Therefore, religious move into small houses and apartments. Finally, the small communities see a clear relationship between the internal life of the community and its ability to enter into the life and concerns of the people. Traditional cloisters are seen as erecting barriers which prevent this contact through rigid schedules and isolation from the daily life of the people.⁵²

la Sagrada Congregación de Religiosos con las conferencias de religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 10:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1972): 7. "Mensaje de las familias franciscanas," *Boletín CLAR* 7:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1969): 10. Pope Paul VI in *Evangelica Testificatio* praises the potential of the small communities for fraternity and evangelization (ET 40). At the same time the Pope declares that large religious communities are still necessary (ET 41).

51 The English translation is taken from: J. Gremillion, ed., *The Gospel of Peace and Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1976): 475.

52 S. de Brito, "Pesquisa sobre as pequenas comunidades," *Convergência*, vol. 28 (outubro 1970): 3, 9. Sister de Brito's survey shows that 28.4% of the small communities have four members and 23% have three. M. Coelho, "Pesquisa pequenas comunidades. Recife CRB Nordeste II," *Convergência*, vol. 52 (janeiro-febreiro 1972): 33-34. Coelho states that the average community has three members.

- The small communities are a rejection of traditional internal structures of religious life. This rejection occurs because these internal structures are not only viewed as barriers to insertion in the world but damaging to religious. Within traditional structures of religious life, it is seen as unable for religious to experience authentic fraternity and develop close relationships with others. Another problem inherent in the traditional structures of religious life is the role of obedience in the community. Often decision-making is completely in the hands of the superior, which makes the other members passive in the governance of their community. Both of these problems, lack of authentic fraternity and governance are viewed by the small communities as detrimental to the personal development of each community member. In response to these problems the small communities search for new structures for internal life and governance which would permit fraternity and co-responsibility among the members.⁵³
- The small communities seek a more credible witness of evangelical poverty. They recognize the gap between practice and reality which plagues traditional religious communities, who claim to live evangelical poverty amid comfort and abundance. For the small communities, the poverty witness demands that religious live a simpler lifestyle with a minimum of possessions.⁵⁴
- The small communities represent an important shift in the evangelization activity of religious. In many traditional religious communities, the work of the community revolves around a single pastoral activity, whether teaching, nursing or parish work. This is not the case with the small communities which lack this

53 J. Comblin, "Significado das pequenas comunidades," *Convergência* 4 (1971) 102-116. P Arrupe, "Las pequenas comunidades. Orientaciones," *Vida Religiosa* 39 (1975): 453-455 Arrupe states that the small communities stress group discernment and interpersonal relationships G. Pastor, "Comunidades de base e grupos pequenos de vida religiosa," p 281-297 S de Brito, "Pesquisa sobre as pequenas comunidades," p. 6, 8 This survey finds that the majority of members in small communities had previously lived in large communities (58 2% with more than 16 members) This fact is interesting in light of the CLAR study: Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Estudio sociológico de los religiosos y las religiosas en América Latina*, Colección Perspectivas 2 (Bogotá Indo-American Press Service, 1971) 73 *Estudio sociológico* shows that the average community is 3-6 members for male religious and 6-9 for women Another interesting finding from the de Brito study is somewhat counter-intuitive. The majority of the small communities are composed of members whose prior community had partially modified its internal life in response to the Council (allowing for dialogue in decision making) Thus 36 8% of the small communities members are from these modified observance communities as opposed to 25% of those whose previous community had not changed its internal life structures. Sister de Brito also offers a picture of the members of these communities. they are young (64 4% are between 20-39 years of age), less than 20 years in religious life (70.3%), more educated than the average religious; and Brazilian (67% are native born Brazilian).

54 P Arrupe, "Las pequenas comunidades," p 453-455 (s)CRIS and D Nardin, "Aspectos alarmantes da vida religiosa no Brasil," *SEDOC* (maio 1970) 1387. The focus on poverty is not universally praised. This confidential cris report – leaked to the press – describes the "demagoguery of poverty" by some religious in the small communities.

uniformity in their works of evangelization. Instead the members of the small communities engage in a variety of activities often with no express communal focus. Within a community, one member may be a social worker while another is a teacher and a third could be a nurse. The small communities break the link between community and a uniform evangelizing activity.⁵⁵

This lack of clear linkage between community and evangelization as a group also involves another shift. The evangelizing activity of religious is no longer centered upon the needs and demands of a congregation's traditional pastoral structures (school or hospital). Instead, within the small communities, evangelization is determined by the free choice of the individual religious.⁵⁶

– Finally, the small communities are overwhelmingly a phenomena of the women religious congregations. Sister de Brito's survey in 1970 lists 169 small communities in Brazil of which 134 are women religious. This overwhelming female presence in the small communities is understandable and a clear effect of Medellín's desire to have more women religious involved in pastoral work.⁵⁷

Types of small communities

In Latin America there appear two different types of small communities, which while sharing the previously mentioned general traits, have a different relationship to evangelization.⁵⁸

The first type of small community is formed usually at the initiative of individual religious or by a religious congregation. The creation of this type of small community is not in response to a pastoral need, but for internal renewal. Through life in small communities religious hope to renew their life and create new internal life structures.⁵⁹

Religious of this small community have no communal focus for their evangelization and can work at different forms of work, including professional jobs, with

55 M. Coelho, "Pesquisa pequenas comunidades," p. 33-34. S. de Brito, "Pesquisa sobre as pequenas comunidades," p. 7.

56 S. de Brito, "Pesquisa sobre as pequenas comunidades," p. 7. M. Coelho, "Pesquisa pequenas comunidades," p. 33-34.

57 S. de Brito, "Pesquisa sobre as pequenas comunidades," p. 4-5. J. Tierny, "Pequenas comunidades empenhadas na pastoral," *Convergência* (1975): 13. In de Brito's survey there are 32 masculine small communities and three composed of both men and women. Tierny mentions one small community of women religious made up of members from different congregations.

58 C. Nogara, "Vida religiosa no Brasil – CRB IX Assembléia Geral," *SEDOC* (janeiro 1972): 545-558. Nogara refers to a CRB study of small communities which reveals three reasons for their creation: to follow the Gospel (11.8%); congregational renewal (43.4%); and evangelization (23.9%).

59 M. Coelho, "Pesquisa pequenas comunidades," p. 34-35. Coelho states that 14% of these communities have internal reform as their prime objective. S. de Brito, "Pesquisa sobre as pequenas comunidades," p. 7, 11. "Nuevo estilo de vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 8:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970): 7, 12. "Experiencias, Brazil. Las pequeñas comunidades de nuestros días," *Boletín CLAR* 8:6 (junio 1970): 3, 5.

little or no direct relation to evangelization. Far from being seen as a problem, this diversity is judged as a means of communal enrichment. For through the various activities, the entire community can learn more about various fields and make a broader presence in the world.⁶⁰

The geographical location of the community is seen as important but is without reference to a clear social location. The small communities seek insertion in the world, but they have no criteria to guide their choice of where they will live. The reason for this is clear, this type of small community sees the world of Latin America as an undifferentiated whole without social conflict or strife. With such an understanding of the social reality, insertion in the world means the ability by religious to live anywhere among any social group.⁶¹

This type of small community eventually disappears. Contact with professionals and clear lack of communal focus raise serious questions about the continued validity of religious life. Finding no sufficient answers, many religious leave their congregations. As a consequence this type of small community disappears with surviving members being re-integrated into traditional cloisters. The irony is that these communities, which were seen as a way to keep young members in congregations, have the opposite effect.⁶²

A second type of small community responds to a bishop's request for religious to assume responsibility for parishes without resident priests. Faced with a shortage of pastoral workers, after Medellín bishops see religious as providing a possible solution. They ask religious to establish communities and care for priestless parishes which are usually among the urban or rural poor. And it is the women religious who assume responsibility for priestless parishes. They move into rectories or near the parishes where they form small communities.

This use of women religious represents an important shift from previous pastoral practice by the Latin American Church. In fact, before the establishment of the first community in 1963 at Nisfa Floresta by four Missionary Sisters of Jesus Crucified, Bishop Sales asks the permission of the Pope.⁶³ The practice of using

60 M. de Freitas and L.M. Mousinho, "A profissionalização das religiosas," *Convergência* (1978): 327-329. L.F. de Almeida, "Vida religiosa e trabalho profissional," *Convergência* (1978): 241-253. M. Lenz, "Vida religiosa e profissionalização," *Convergência* (1982): 558-563. The connection between professionalism and the small communities, while not a concern for CLAR, is much studied in Brazil.

61 C. Boff, "Motivações da inserção e dificuldades do processo, superação destas dificuldades," in *Caminhada das pequenas comunidades. Vida religiosa inserida. I Encontro das Pequenas Comunidades do NE. II-1981* (Recife: 1982): 46. Boff states that one third of the small communities are in upper and middle class areas.

62 C. Maccise, "Inserción y vida religiosa," *Cuadernos de Estudio México* (1991).

63 Archbishop J.M. Pires, "Mais um capítulo da história da vida religiosa," in *Caminhada das pequenas comunidades* (Recife: 1982): 23-24. Bishop Pires says that Bishop Eugênio Sales (then auxiliary bishop in Natal) asked the Pope's permission for women religious to fulfill this role in parishes.

women religious as administrators for priestless parishes soon spreads to other parts of Brazil and throughout Latin America.⁶⁴

The linkage of the small community with a parish has effects which distinguish it from the previously mentioned type. Though this parochial small community is also concerned with the internal renewal of religious life and the benefits of a diversity in the evangelization works by members, there is a difference. Regardless of what a community member does, there is now a clear focus for evangelization. Each community member is expected to work at least part time in the parish. Joined to this is the simple fact that the location of these parochial small communities religious are geographically in poor areas.

The work of these small communities soon take religious beyond the parish boundaries. Seeing the lack of involvement in the parish, religious contact local groups and organizations as a way to reach the people for evangelization and in order to assist plans for local development.⁶⁵

The small communities' contact and life in poor areas have a important effects upon religious. Through day to day experience, religious discover that their previous vision of the social reality is inadequate. Life among the poor allows the religious to see and experience the conflictive nature of the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality.⁶⁶

A second effect of this type of small community is subtle but nonetheless important. Though parochial work, women religious are responsible for the liturgical life of the parish. This leads women religious into new areas of ministry which previously were the sole domain of priest. Women religious preach, preside over prayer services and officiate at weddings.⁶⁷ The experience leads women religious to reflect on the hierarchal church and their role in it. In the light of this reflection, some women religious radically change their theological views about the Church and ministry.⁶⁸

64 C. Palmés, "Comunidades eclesiales de base y sus lideres religiosos en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 11:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1973): 1. Palmés says that there are at least 100 parishes run by women religious and 11 in Venezuela. J. Tierny, "Las religiosas dirigentes de parroquias," *Boletín CLAR* 9:8 (agosto 1971): 4. Idem, "Anexo proyecto del III Plan bienal de los obispos del Brasil (CNBB) sobre el año internacional de la mujer," *Pro Mundi Vita*, vol. 59 (1976): 31. Tierny states that in 1975 there are around 500 such parochial small communities of women in Brazil. K. Gilfeather and N. Bozzo, *Las religiosas, crisis y esperanza*, vol. 1 (Santiago: Centro Bellarmino, 1972): 39-43. Gilfeather and Bozzo note the small communities in Chile.

65 M. Coelho, "Pesquisa pequenas comunidades," p. 34. Sixty percent of the communities surveyed worked with local groups.

66 M. Lenz, "Dimensão social da inserção dos religiosos no meio popular," *Convergência* (1980): 276-280.

67 Z.F. Ribeiro, "O papel da mulher como pessoa nos ministérios," in *Ministérios e Teologia, Teologia em Diálogo* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1985): 27-57. J. Tierny, "Anexo proyecto del III Plan bienal," p. 31-37.

68 Z.F. Ribeiro, "O papel da mulher como pessoa nos ministérios," p. 27-57. K. Gilfeather,

Short reflections by women religious in parochial small communities appear regularly in the *Boletín CLAR*.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, later CLAR theologians usually describe the small communities as only concerned with the internal renewal of religious life. This, in effect, ignores the parochial small communities, which while concerned with renewal, also have from their creation a clear evangelization focus.⁷⁰

Evolution to the comunidad inserta

The experiences of the small communities reveal their original intentions as insufficient. And this insufficiency flows not from a lack of planning but reflects internal tensions around how religious life understands itself and evangelization.⁷¹

"Effects of Living in Marginal Areas upon Religious Women in Chile and upon their Relations with the Institutional Church," *SEDOS Bulletin* (1979): 249-254. Idem, "The Changing Role of Women in the Catholic Church in Chile," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 16:1 (1977): 39-54. K. Gilfeather and N. Bozzo, *Las religiosas, crisis y esperanza*, p. 84-93. It is interesting that in Gilfeather's survey (upon which the first two articles are also part) 40% of the women religious believe that it is impossible to observe the vow of poverty with a comfortable lifestyle. Sister Gilfeather also studied how new pastoral roles affected women religious in Chile. While this study is not limited to just small communities, at least 25% of her sample are from these communities. As a result of the new pastoral practice by women religious, certain theological perspectives are seen as shifting. One example is that many women religious equate service to the world with assistance in the poor's struggles (42.86% of Chileans but only 24.82% of the foreign missionary sisters). The women religious also see it more important to have a Church which is a small socially committed group than a unity where everyone can belong.

69 "Pequeñas comunidades," *Boletín CLAR* 8:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1970): 6-7. "Experiencias de las religiosas en el Brasil," *Boletín CLAR* 7:2 (febrero 1969): 8. "Vicarias de religiosas en acción," *Boletín CLAR* 7:3 (marzo 1970): 8.

70 J.B. Libânio, *Las grandes rupturas socio-culturales y eclesiales*, Colección Perspectivas 12 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1980; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 44-65. M. de Freitas, "El nuevo lugar social de la vida religiosa en el Brasil y la formación permanente," in *Formación para la vida religiosa hoy*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 54 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1987): 70-82. A. Moser, *Integración afectiva y compromiso social en América Latina*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie II, vol. 7 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 22-25. Moser's book makes a clear distinction between small communities formed for only internal reform and those which work in parishes.

71 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 44-55. M. Perdiá, "Visión de la vida religiosa en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 22:1 (enero 1984): 10-13. At the Brazilian 1984 General Assembly, CLAR President Perdiá describes the small communities as a sort of catalyst which makes clear previous contradictions in religious life and evangelization. J.B. Libânio, *Las grandes rupturas*, p. 65-68. For Libânio, the small communities embrace the post-Vatican II world, where the bourgeoisie is the new focus for ecclesial concern. In embracing this world, Libânio states that religious life unwittingly accepted secularization into its life which further exacerbated the internal deficiencies of religious life. Palacio does not deny the influence of secularization in bringing to the forefront tensions but does not see this as a shift to the modern bourgeois. M. de Freitas, "Conjuntura eclesial latinoamericana e vida religiosa," in *Vida religiosa e nova consciência eclesial* (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1988): 37-122. Sister de Freitas links this shift to not just experiences but world views. The small communities accept and base their life upon a vision of the modern world as presented in *Gaudium*

The small communities reveal internal tensions about the relationship of religious to society. While traditional religious life clearly distinguishes between its internal life and relationship to society, the experience of small communities shows this to be a mirage. Religious in small communities discover that the renewal of their life has been advanced not by withdrawal into themselves or a *fuga mundi* but through insertion in the world. Furthermore, through contact with the poor's religiosity, religious find a renewed sense of their life and a deeper spiritual dimension. From this experience, religious learn that the internal life of a community cannot be separated from social relationships. This discovery also affects how religious understand their identity.

Reflecting on their past formation, religious in small communities see that religious life identity is always formed in relationship to certain social groups. The question is which social group religious choose to have their identity fashioned around.⁷²

The failure of many small communities also highlights another tension of religious life, namely individualism. While this is most apparent in the first type of small community, it affects the parochial type as well. From the experience of the small communities, religious learn that their focus on personal development and freedom had been too self-centered. For personal and communal development, religious see that there needs to be a common focus beyond the concerns of the community.⁷³ The discovery of social conflict highlights a tension with any claim that evangelization must be apolitical. From the small communities, experience, religious see that evangelization has political consequences which can support an unjust *status quo* or seek its transformation. The small communities, while building community among the poor and cooperating with local organizations, fail to recognize these consequences in their evangelization. Religious discover that in Latin America evangelization must be political and is inseparable from support for the liberation of the poor.⁷⁴

From an awareness of these internal tensions the liberative *comunidad inserta* arises. In some cases, these are formed by small communities who decide to shift

et Spes. The *comunidades insertas*, on the other hand, receive the conciliar calls from a different perspective and the context of the Third World, dominated by massive poverty. M. Agudelo, *La inserción y la inculturación de la vida religiosa en el pueblo* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1993): 38-40. From life in a *comunidad inserta*, Sister Agudelo contrasts her experience of Latin American reality with the world of *Gaudium et Spes*.

72 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 43-48. R. Antoncich, "Visión de la vida religiosa en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 22:1 (enero 1984): 11-13.

73 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 45-48. D. Brunelli, *Profetas del Reino*, Colección CLAR 58 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1986; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1987): 34-38. (page references from reprint edition). J.B. Libânio, *Las grandes rupturas*, p. 52, 64-68, 116.

74 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 50-52. C. Caliman, "Vida religiosa inserida ...nova forma de seguimento de Cristo hoje," p. 48-53.

to insertion among the poor.⁷⁵ However, in the majority of cases the *comunidades insertas* are created by religious with no prior experience in a small community.⁷⁶

The shift to the liberative *comunidad inserta* results in the discovery of a new focus for religious communities, the option for the poor. This option views the identity of religious life as in relation to a definite social class, the poor. Through fidelity to the option for the poor, religious center their life and evangelization neither around traditional pastoral commitments of their congregations nor individualism. Instead, it is solidarity with the poor which becomes the criterium for religious life and evangelization. Finally, in a context of social conflict, religious see that their evangelization cannot be apolitical. A choice must be made and, through observance of the option for the poor, the liberative *comunidades insertas* choose the side of the poor.⁷⁷

A minority movement

Since the evolution of the liberative *comunidad inserta* is dependent on new sociological and theological insights arising from prior experiences, it is difficult to date when these communities first appear. According to Clodovis Boff, few *comunidades insertas* are founded before 1975⁷⁸ and the majority appear only after the 1979 Puebla Conference.⁷⁹

75 M. Coelho, "Pesquisa pequenas comunidades," p. 35-36. Coelho mentions that as early as 1972 some small communities shift from their original intentions to insertion among the poor. R. de Oliveira, "Para um levantamento estatístico das comunidades de inserção," *Convergência* (1984): 63-65. This survey finds that twenty nine of the communities began as small communities and later decided to enter into insertion among the poor. E. Costa, "Comunicação da experiência," *Convergência* (novembro 1980): 573-576. This is a short reflection from a community of inserted Sisters of the Assumption who in 1973 assume the responsibility for a parish on the outskirts of São Paulo. They initially move into the parish rectory but two years later relocate into a simple house. About this move they say "we began our true insertion among the poor"; ("é que comencamos nossa verdadeira inserção no meio do povo" p. 575). "Informe II seminário de estudo sobre vida religiosa inserida nos meios populares," *Convergência* (1982): 198. This move from parish rectory to a common house is a frequent occurrence by communities.

76 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 16-26, 44-54. All agree that an evolution from small communities to *comunidades insertas* occurs, though it is described differently. M. de Freitas, "El nuevo lugar social de la vida religiosa," p. 70-82. Sister de Freitas, no doubt following the thinking of J.B. Libânio, describes this evolution as a gradual shift in religious life and evangelization to the poor as a social subject.

77 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 27-38, 43-45. C. Boff, "Reflexões e questionamentos em torno da vida comunitária," in *Caminhada das pequenas comunidades. Vida religiosa inserida. I Encontro das Pequenas Comunidades do NE. II-1981* (Recife: 1982): 122-123. M. Lenz, "Dimensão social da inserção," p. 276-285. C. Caliman, "Vida religiosa inserida... nova forma de seguimento de Cristo hoje", p. 70-71, 79-80.

78 C. Boff, "Reflexão teológica sobre a experiência de Deus," in *Caminhada das pequenas comunidades. Vida religiosa inserida. I Encontro das Pequenas Comunidades do NE. II-1981*, (Recife: 1982): 95.

79 R. de Oliveira, "Para um levantamento estatístico," p. 62-64. A survey with CERIS data on

The *comunidades insertas* are, like the small communities, a movement which is overwhelmingly of women religious. The majority of religious in the *comunidades insertas* are women and most communities belong to women congregations.⁸⁰ There are very few statistics on the *comunidades insertas*. One reason for this is the difficulty to determine if a community is, in fact, a *comunidad inserta*.⁸¹ After Puebla, the CLAR General Assembly and General Board meetings contain frequent reports by the national conferences on their *comunidades insertas*. However, very rarely do these reports mention how many *comunidades insertas* are in their country.⁸² In 1986 CLAR President Ugalde estimates that 15% of all Latin American religious live in *comunidades insertas*. Clodovis Boff, writing an article on insertion, puts the figure at around 10%. While it is impossible to

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- women religious in *comunidades insertas*. The majority of these communities (55.5%) are founded after 1980. M. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa inserta nos meios populares*, anexo 1.
- 80 CLAR, *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR Guatemala*, p. 277, 286, 329, 350. The fact that the overwhelming majority of inserted religious are women is generally acknowledged – although until recently not highlighted – in CLAR. Several national conference reports to the Ninth CLAR General Assembly (1985) mention the fact that few men religious are living in *comunidades insertas*. Argentina, Chile, Ecuador (which says over 80% of the inserted religious are women), Peru, and Venezuela.
- 81 R. de Oliveira, “Para um levantamento estatístico,” p. 62-64. This article stresses that there are several reasons why it is difficult to compile statistics on *comunidades insertas*. First, few congregations keep separate statistics on inserted communities. Second, while size and geography are important, these factors alone do not make a *comunidad inserta*. There must also be a clear communal intention to live a different relationship with the poor and assist their liberation. These elements are impossible to measure, short of visiting a community or on the basis of written reflections. As a practical example, how does one label a community living in a parish rectory but striving to integrate itself in poor’s world and culture? Inserted or not?
- 82 Some incomplete statistics do appear in CLAR publications. “CLAR-ANDO 1,” *Boletín CLAR* 23.1 (enero 1985). This insert to the *Boletín CLAR* lists: Argentina with 50 inserted communities (85 individual religious), Panama with 18 inserted religious, 80 inserted religious in Guatemala, and Honduras as having 35 inserted religious. CLAR, *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR Guatemala*, p. 247, 286. From the CLAR Ninth General Assembly conferences reports say that Bolivia has 34 *comunidades insertas* (32 of which are women religious communities), while Ecuador says that 8-9% of its religious live in *comunidades insertas*. CLAR, *XXI Junta Directiva de la CLAR Buenos Aires, Argentina* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1986) 55-70, 88-94, 136-140, 103-110, 115-122, 128-135. The 1986 CLAR General Board Meeting states that Costa Rica has six women’s *comunidades insertas*, Honduras has at least eight *comunidades insertas*, Venezuela between 150-200 *comunidades insertas*, Nicaragua says that it has 20 such communities, Peru mentions 200 insertions (communities?), the Dominican Republic has at least three. There are also single experiences mentioned in Colombia, and Panama. *Retos*, (julio 1987). This magazine lists 49 *comunidades insertas* in Uruguay (14 in urban areas). “Mensaje a las comunidades religiosas insertas en medios populares,” *Boletín CLAR* 25.11 (noviembre 1987). 10. This declaration from a meeting of inserted religious states that there are 300 *comunidades insertas* in Argentina. R. de Oliveira, “Para um levantamento estatístico,” p. 62-64. R. de Oliveira says that in 1984 there are 458 women *comunidades insertas* in Brazil.

determine the accuracy of these estimates, one thing is clear, namely that those who live in the *comunidades insertas* are a small minority of Latin American religious.⁸³

83 A. Pérez Oliver, "Latinoamerica: Inserción, martirio, proyectos de misión," *Vida Religiosa* 61 (1986): 453. C. Boff, "Comunidades inseridas, visão de conjunto," in *Inserção: Novo modo de ser vida religiosa* (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1989): 32. W. Mohn, ed., *Religião popular e vida religiosa inserida*, p. 116. In 1984, CRB President Falquetto estimates 20% of all religious in Brazil live in *comunidades insertas* with about 3,000 members. According to Falquetto, one third of these are in the North East region of Brazil. One may wonder if these figures, namely that between 10-20% of all religious live in *comunidades insertas*, are not somewhat exaggerated. R. de Oliveira, "Para um levantamento estatístico," p. 62-64. There is no way to know but an interesting contrast to President Falquetto's claim appears in this survey of women religious communities (which are the overwhelming majority of religious who live in insertion). It finds 458 *comunidades insertas*, which account for 3.6% of the total women religious in Brazil (or 8.8% of the communities). Interestingly this study agrees with Falquetto that about a third (34.1%) of the *comunidades insertas* are in the North East.

9 The liberative comunidad inserta

9.0 Introduction

The diversity of *comunidades insertas* has been explored. In Chapter 8 four different streams of insertion were identified which share many common traits. Each of the four stress the material poverty witness by the community in its lifestyle and evangelization. Each sees in the Incarnation the poor Jesus who is a model for insertion among the poor. The *comunidades insertas* view the geographical location of a community as important and is determined not by the past or pragmatism but in relation to contemporary social reality, where certain groups are excluded and impoverished. It is there that the *comunidades insertas* locate themselves. The *comunidades insertas* also strive for equality with the poor, which results in living with violence and uniting themselves to the poor's sufferings as well as their culture.

Finally, the *comunidades insertas* choose life in an hostile environment, being aware that they shall bear not just physical violence but also the poor's hostility against the Church for its past alliances with imperialism and oppression.

In spite of the common traits, the *comunidades insertas* have different understandings of their life and the limitations of their evangelization. The Little Brothers and Little Sisters see their insertion as needing to make a contemplative presence among the poor. For this reason, they refuse responsibility for parishes and will not actively participate in any political activity. A different understanding of insertion is held by the secular institute of Prado and the worker-priests. For them, insertion among the poor is viewed in terms of evangelization, though for the later this includes an active witness against social injustice. Similarly, members of the Prado and Jacques Loew's Worker's Mission of St. Peter and Paul work in parishes and are open to participation in political activities. Finally, there are the *comunidades insertas* which stress liberation and evangelization.

It is the fourth stream on which this chapter eventually rests the spotlight, the liberative stream. For this is the stream of *comunidad inserta* which arises in Latin America and gains the attention (later, as shall be seen, wholeheartedly support) of CLAR. For the liberative *comunidad inserta*, religious accept life and insertion among the poor in order to further the liberation of the poor as well as their evangelization. While this support can be given through work in a variety of traditional forms of evangelization (health care, education and even parish work), these are redirected to support social change rather than the *status quo*.

The liberative stream of *comunidad inserta* has several features which are unique from the other three. First, it can neither claim a founder/ess nor a link to one religious congregation. Instead the liberative *comunidades insertas* are a broad-based movement which includes religious from a variety of congregations. Second, the liberative *comunidades insertas* are the result of a historical process beginning after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. Building upon the failures and praxis of the 'small communities', many religious realize that a new approach is necessary. And this realization leads to insertion into the world of the poor to support liberation and evangelization. Finally, the liberative *comunidad inserta* is a minority movement and composed mostly of women religious.

Chapter 9 continues this exploration of the *comunidades insertas*, but with a more restrictive focus.

9.1 A New Form of Religious Life

The liberative stream of insertion differs from the other three streams of *comunidades insertas* and this difference lies not primarily in the demand that religious support the poor's liberation. This support by religious for the poor's liberation could of itself be no more than variant of the social witness/evangelization *comunidad inserta*.

Re-interpretation of religious life

The Latin American liberative *comunidad inserta* distinguishes itself from the other three streams first of all in its history. Unlike the Little Brothers and Little Sisters, the Prado institute and Jacques Loew's worker-priests, the liberative *comunidades insertas* do not flow from the inspiration of one founder/ess.

A consequence of this lack of a single founder/ess is that the liberative *comunidad inserta* bears a different relationship to a congregation's founding charism than the other three streams. Religious who follow Charles de Foucauld or Anton Chevrier accept the life of insertion as a normal expression of their life. Similarly, members of Jacques Loew's secular institute insert themselves among the poor workers to continue his witness and evangelization. Life in *comunidades insertas* is for all these three streams a normally accepted manner to live the founder's inspiration and charism. This is, however, not the case with the liberative *comunidad inserta*. When Jesuits, Immaculate Heart Sisters or Dominicans live in a *comunidad inserta*, they opt for a form of life which is neither the accepted norm nor seen as naturally flowing from the founder's charism. Inserted religious decide to express their congregation's founding charism in an alternative manner.⁸⁴ Yet this decision has to be justified in and inserted religious seek this justification through a re-interpretation of their religious life.

84 C. Boff, "Pequenas comunidades na congregação e diocese," p. 139. Boff says that, "It deals

Through this re-interpretation, inserted religious look first of all at their foundational charisms, but they begin not with the history of their congregations and founders. The reason for this is that *comunidades insertas* adopt a critical perspective of history. As they look to their congregations' past, the inserted religious see stories which are never objective descriptions but always slanted to reflect the thinking and social expectations of the writers. As Carlos Palacio says, "Each age has its image of the origins. Therefore the rediscovery of the charism needs to be complemented with other criteria..."⁸⁵

For the *comunidades insertas*, this raises a serious problem because a religious' Christian life must be faithful to his/her congregation's founding charism. With the acceptance of a critical perspective on history, the problem for the inserted religious becomes one of interpretation. How can one interpret a foundational charism without past distortions so that religious can live it in a historically relevant manner? Or in Palacio's words what criteria are used to find the charism of the founders?

For the inserted religious, the criteria for the interpretation of the charism of the founders come from the present praxis by religious in support of the poor's liberation. In reflection upon their praxis, inserted religious find their religious life challenged by questions to which they have no answers. They use these questions as a starting point in reviewing the history of their religious congregations. In this way the histories of religious life are challenged to offer answers which allow religious to live faithfully their foundational charism and in a historically relevant manner.

The praxis of religious among the poor allows religious to find a common denominator for most congregations' charisms. Reviewing their congregations' histories in the light of praxis, inserted religious discover the connection between the poor and the founder/esses. In the past of most congregations is a clear option for the poor, which the founder and his/her early followers adopt according to a specific historical era.

Thus through praxis as a hermeneutic, the liberative *comunidades insertas* discover that their life is not opposed to their congregation's founding charism. Instead, insertion among the poor is an historically relevant manner of fidelity to it in Latin America.⁸⁶

with the illegality facing the institutionalized legality, a legality of consecrated life. The small communities [the *comunidades insertas*-jk] are the creators of new legality"; ("Tratase de ilegalidade frente à legalidade instituída, à legalidade consagrada. As pequenas comunidades são criadoras de uma nova legalidade").

85 C. Palacio, *Reinterpretar a vida religiosa* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1991): 30-31. 'Inserted religious' in this chapter refer to those religious in liberative *comunidades insertas* unless otherwise stated.

86 V. Codina, "La inserción entre la experiencia y la teología," *Retos* 4 (1987): 20-28. M.J. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares*, p. 185-187. C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 39-45, 57-62. Idem, "Reflexiones teológicas en torno a la inserción," p. 3-7. L.A. de Mattos, "O carisma do religioso na ótica do pobre," *Convergência* 24 (1989): 237-256.

But a new interpretation of the congregational charism alone is insufficient. The inserted religious also re-interpret the spirituality which is part of their founding charisms. Living among the poor religious experience God in a new way but they discover that within the traditional categories of spirituality, this experience of God cannot be adequately explained. Through this discovery, inserted religious see a clear need for a re-interpretation of spirituality so that this experience of God among the poor can be articulated.⁸⁷ The need to justify their life of insertion is another reason which pushes inserted religious to re-interpret their congregations' spiritualities. In the face of critics who see the liberative *comunidades insertas* as robbing religious life of its essential spiritual elements, inserted religious re-interpret spirituality to prove the contrary. Rather than robbing religious life of spirituality, insertion among the poor gives religious life a new, previously unknown depth.⁸⁸ Thus in order to more clearly express this experience of God and make clear its spiritual basis, inserted religious re-interpret their congregations' spirituality. This re-interpretation is, for the inserted religious, viewed as the creation of a new spirituality, flowing from their experience among the poor. The inserted religious seek a spirituality of insertion. In the creation of this spirituality, they do not restrict themselves to spiritual works and insights from their congregation's tradition. Instead, they use three sources beyond the traditional sources of their congregations in molding a spirituality of insertion.

First, there are the reflections by religious, individually or communally, who live in liberative *comunidades insertas*. Confronted by life among the poor, religious compare their present insights and experiences with the spirituality which they learned previously. In doing this the inserted religious see the contrast between what they experience and the traditional spirituality of their congregations.⁸⁹

Yet it is not only a contrast with a congregation's spirituality which is a source for this new spirituality. A second source is the religiosity of the poor. Inserted religious in their desire to enter all aspects of the poor's world also participate in poor's religiosity. They join pilgrimages, processions, public recitation of the rosary and fiestas with the poor. Inserted religious also listen to the poor's prayers and insights about God. From all these experiences, they learn that certain aspects

J. Sario, "Inserción y carisma de la Compañía," p. 55-81. A. Morales, "Teología de la liberación y formación franciscana en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 26:4 (abril 1988): 3-22, esp. 11, 14-16. Sario and Morales give two examples of a re-interpretation of their congregation's founding charism.

87 C. Palacio, "Reflexiones teológicas en torno a la inserción," p. 5-6.

88 B. González Buelta, *El Dios oprimido. Hacia una espiritualidad de la inserción* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1989): 9-11.

89 Conferencia de Religiosos y Religiosas de Venezuela, "Espiritualidad de la inserción," *Nuevo Mundo*, vol. 127 (maio-junio 1986): 299-304. This is series of short reflections by inserted religious which are presented before a meeting of the Venezuelan Conference of Religious. "Aporte de las comunidades insertas del país," *Testimonio*, no. 90 (julio-agosto 1985): 68-69. B.G. Buelta, *El Dios oprimido*, p. 17-28. The formulation of a spirituality of insertion becomes, as later will be seen, a major focus of CLAR's CRIMPO project.

of the poor's religiosity have great importance and provide another contrast with traditional spirituality. Unlike many spiritualities of religious life, the poor make no separation between God and His/Her action in the world. Nor is the poor's spirituality laden with a past which tends to elitism and intellectualism, as do most religious congregations' spiritualities. Thus for inserted religious, the religiosity of the poor serves as an important source from which a new spirituality for religious life can be fashioned.⁹⁰

Finally, the Bible is an important source for a spirituality of insertion. While an important source for all spirituality, the inserted religious stress the importance of the Bible when interpreted from the perspective of a specific social class, the poor. Through participation in Bible reflections with the poor, especially in the *CEBS*, inserted religious again experience a radical contrast with their former spiritual understanding. The poor interpret the Bible in a different manner, more simple and down to earth in comparison with professional theologians. Inserted religious see that the perspective of the poor on the Bible brings new insights and understandings about God, Jesus and their religious life.⁹¹

Option for the poor

The liberative stream of insertion centers its life and evangelization around the option for the poor. This option demands a radical solidarity with the poor which leads to insertion in their life, suffering and struggles. And this solidarity is not one of passive presence but active engagement with the poor in actions for social change. Inserted religious see fidelity to the option as requiring support for the liberation of the poor from their oppression.

For inserted religious the option for the poor also leads to accepting the perspective of the poor. In so doing, religious strive to view society, their religious life and evangelization from the perspective of the poor. This perspective constantly

90 "Comunidade inserta: Religiosas de la Asunción Sayaxche Peten. Texto de Trabajo 5," in *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR. Guatemala, abril 13-23 de 1985* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1985): 108, 281-282. B. González Bueta, *Bajar al encuentro de Dios. Vida de oración entre los pobres* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1988). Idem, *El Dios oprimido*. C. Maccise, "La espiritualidad de la inserción: Un camino de la Iglesia en América Latina," *Testimonio*, no. 98 (1986): 14-24. M.J. Rosado Nunes, "Rezar com os pés no chão," *Convergência* 20 (1985): 423-431. C. Boff, "Reflexões," in *Religião popular e vida religiosa inserida. II Encontro das Pequenas Comunidades do Nordeste II*, ed. W. Mohn (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986): 96-97. This 1984 meeting of inserted religious in the NE region of Brazil has popular religion as its theme. In preparation for the meeting, each community had to have participated in some form of popular religious practice and reflected upon this experience. N. Zevallos, *Espiritualidad del desierto. Espiritualidad de la inserción* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1981). Zevallos, a former CLAR vice president, makes one of the earliest attempts to formulate a spirituality of insertion. He uses the desert as a metaphor to describe a process of purification which religious life undergoes in the *comunidades insertas*.

91 Comunidad Oblatos del Corazón de Jesús, "Experiencia de inserción en Panamá Transistmica-Colón," *Boletín CLAR* 23:7-8 (agosto 1985): 22. "Experiencia de una vida de inserción," *Boletín CLAR* 23:9 (septiembre 1985): 20. M.J. Rosado Nunes, "Rezar com os pés no chão," p. 423-431.

reveals how religious should modify their life, personally as well as communally, and evangelization to greater solidarity with the poor.

Finally, the option for the poor links inserted religious to the tradition of the Church and their religious life. The option for the poor is revealed in the Old Testament by a God who saves His people in Egypt and continually shows His/Her concern for the poor. Further the founder/esses of most religious congregations accepted the option for the poor and it has always been part of reform movements in religious life.⁹²

A new form of religious life

The liberative *comunidad inserta* has a different self understanding of its relationship to traditional forms of religious life. The Little Brothers and Little Sisters, the Prado secular institute and the worker-priests see themselves as new responses to ecclesial and social needs. The liberative *comunidad inserta* sees itself not merely as a new response but new form of religious life. The inserted religious claim that their way of life is so different that it is no longer possible to be classified together with other forms of religious life. Instead, the liberative *comunidad inserta* represent a new form of religious life, a rupture with the past.

Ironically, while a rupture with other forms of religious life, the liberative *comunidad inserta* also recovers lost elements in the tradition of religious life. The liberative *comunidad inserta* recovers for religious life fidelity to the option to the poor and the importance of prophetic witness against injustice.

The importance of this claim to being a new form of religious life rests upon a reading of the history of religious life. Within the history of religious life, there are times in which a paradigm shift occurs. At these times, existing religious life is radically challenged by the appearance of new forms which advance a different paradigmatic model. These new paradigms are able to incorporate elements from traditional religious life but mold them in a more historically relevant manner. Thus through the centuries, religious life has seen the appearance of: hermits, monks, friar minors, regular clergy, apostolic societies and secular institutes. For the liberative *comunidades insertas*, their form of life is nothing less than a paradigm shift in religious life which represents a recovery of the option for the poor by religious. And, for the inserted religious, this paradigm shift presents, just as in the past, a challenge for all existing religious congregations.⁹³

92 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 27-32. M. Lenz, "Dimensão social da inserção," p. 277-285. V. Codina, "Vida religiosa y opción por los pobres," in *Sobre la opción por los pobres*, ed. J.M. Vigil, 2nd ed. (Santiago: Ediciones Rehue, 1992): 99-104. J.M. Guerrero, "Inserción: Una perspectiva para todos los religiosos," p. 10. J. Pixley-C. Boff, *Opción por los pobres*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1986): 185-213. Pixley and Boff also discuss the link between the option for the poor and the past history of religious life.

93 C. Caliman, "Vida religiosa inserida...nova forma de seguimento de Cristo hoje," p. 70-72, 79-80. V. Codina and N. Zevallos, *Vida religiosa. Historia y teología*, (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1987): 177-194. C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 55-64. C. Boff, "Pequenas comunidades na congregação e diocese," p. 138-139.

The liberative *comunidades insertas* rest their claim to being a new form of religious life upon pneumatology. It is the Holy Spirit which is inspiring men and women to leave more traditional forms of religious life and live among the poor. It is also fidelity to the Spirit which leads religious to continue in the life of insertion, even though it differs greatly from other forms of religious community.⁹⁴

Reception of the social sciences into religious life and evangelization

Another trait of the liberative *comunidad inserta* is that it represents an attempt to actively receive the modern social sciences in a way which affects religious life and its evangelization.

The liberative *comunidad inserta* accept the need for social analysis as necessary for the formulation of religious identity. It was previously mentioned that the *comunidad inserta* recognizes a connection between religious life identity and its social relationships. With this recognition, the *comunidad inserta* stress the importance of social location. For it is from a specific social location that religious forge relationships which mold their identity and social analysis is for this reason important. For through social analysis, religious can concretely discover their social location and with which social class they are in relationship. In this way religious can clearly see how their identity has been formed (or deformed) and where they must relocate to re-create it.⁹⁵

Social analysis also affects the evangelization by allowing inserted religious to see the conflicts which exist in society and which social groups are marginalized. Since evangelization cannot claim political neutrality, it must include within its efforts a message of liberation which is always in relationship to a specific socio-political context. Through social analysis, religious can reform their evangelization in the light of social conflict and marginalization.⁹⁶

Finally, the liberative *comunidad inserta* receives the social sciences through acceptance of the relationship between knowledge and social location. Using insights from the sociology of knowledge, inserted religious accept that how one's view of reality is linked to social position. This, in fact, can be seen as one of the foundational principles of the liberative *comunidad inserta*, namely that among the poor reality can be seen differently, less obscured by the dominant ideology.⁹⁷

94 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 41-42, 59. R. Antoncich, "Teología y espiritualidad de una opción," p. 5-6. Antoncich sees the *comunidades insertas* as flowing from a threefold movement of the Spirit which a) brings religious to the poor b) causes them to listen to the poor and c) encourages them to root their life in the poor's world. Though he does not specifically label the *comunidades insertas* a new form of religious life, it is nonetheless clear that he sees them as challenging all religious life.

95 M.C. de Freitas, "El nuevo lugar de la vida religiosa," p. 88-107.

96 M. Concha, "Perspectivas eclesiológicas desde las comunidades religiosas que caminan con el pueblo," in *Cruz y Resurrección: Presencia y animación de una Iglesia nueva*, ed. F. Soto (México: CRT-Servir, 1978): 182-187. F. Taborda, "Vida religiosa, evangelização e sociedade de classes," *Convergência* 23 (1988): 421-437. L. Boff, *Vida segundo o Espírito* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1983): 56-76.

97 M.C. de Freitas, "El nuevo lugar de la vida religiosa," p. 88-107. CRB, *Seminário nacional*

Religious life as a process

A further distinguishing trait of the liberative stream of *comunidade inserta* is its view of the religious life. For the liberative stream, religious life cannot be understood in static terms. The liberative *comunidade inserta* rejects the idea that the religious life can be defined in any fixed unchangeable manner. Instead, the liberative *comunidade inserta* sees the religious life in terms of an ongoing process. Within this process inserted religious need to constantly evaluate their life and fidelity to the option for the poor.⁹⁸

This understanding of religious life also affects the evangelization of *comunidades insertas*. Inserted religious ask themselves constantly how their evangelization can be a fuller expression of support to the poor and their liberation. This self-questioning moves inserted religious to discover new areas where response and action are needed. As a result of this self-questioning, religious discover new concerns which affect the life of the poor, and sometimes new forms of presence.⁹⁹

An agent in the construction of the Church of the Poor

Finally, the liberative stream of *comunidade inserta* sees itself as an active agent in the construction of the Church of the Poor. Through stressing the need to work and live as equals, the inserted religious offer an image of Church which is collegial and rooted in the concerns and life of the poor. Yet the inserted religious aim not solely to present a new ecclesial image, they also empower the poor to become active leaders within the Church community. Through this empowerment, inserted religious see that slowly a Latin American Church of the poor is arising which has as a new center of concern, the poor.¹⁰⁰

comunidades religiosas inseridas Setembro 24-29 1979, São Paulo, documento 3, documento 27 At this national meeting of Brazilian inserted religious, sociology is used to analyze the identity of religious among the poor, their pastoral praxis, and liturgy. J B Libânio, *Spiritual Discernment and Politics. Guidelines for Religious Communities* (Petrópolis Vozes, 1977, repr Quezon City, Claretian Publications, 1985) 11-18 Although not specifically mentioning the *comunidades insertas*, Libânio stresses the importance of social location for religious and its effect upon a community's actions, thinking and view of the world

98 "Mística en la inserción," *Retos* 5 (marzo 1988). 26-27 CRB, *Seminário de estudo sobre vida religiosa inserida no meio popular Setembro 24-29 de 1979 São Paulo, documento 12. C Palacio, Vida religiosa inserta, p. 26-30, 33*

99 "A luta pela preservação do lago," in *Seminário nacional de animação dos GRIS 26-30 de maio de 1987 Goiânia* (Rio de Janeiro CRB, 1987), mimeo At a national meeting of inserted religious, one community of women religious (FMM) moves into a leper colony which supports itself through fishing After discovering that pollution threatens the lake, the sisters become involved in protecting the local ecology W Mohn, ed, *Religião popular e vida religiosa inserida*, p. 88, 92-93 One example of an expanded area of presence is religious who accept jobs in factories

100 S Torres, "Visible Signs of Jesus Christ's Love for the Poorest," in *Latin American Theologians on Religious Life* (Quezon City. Claretian Publications, 1989) 119-121. R. Muñoz, "Our Poor Brothers and Sisters have awakened Us," in *Latin American Theologians on Religious Life*, p. 127-131. Maria Lina Boff, "The Evolution of Religious Life in the 'EcclesioGenesis Movement'," in *Latin American Theologians on the Religious Life*,

9.2 Relationship to the CEBs

The *CEBs* are important for all streams of insertion in Latin America. From reports of *comunidades insertas* before CLAR General Assemblies, it is clear that the Little Sisters and Brothers as well as the sisters of Prado work with the base communities. This close cooperation is understandable since the *CEBs* are advocated by the bishops at Medellín as well as Puebla.¹⁰¹

Yet while there is general support and involvement in the *CEBs*, the liberative *comunidades insertas* have a special relationship with the base communities. This relationship flows from the origin of the liberative *comunidades insertas* and affects their evangelization and religious life identity.

The relationship between the liberative *comunidad inserta* and the *CEBs* goes back to its beginning. As previously mentioned, the liberative *comunidad inserta* is the product of an evolution from the small communities for the management of priestless parishes. Having relocated to work in these parishes, religious meet the sacramental needs of the poor but the main focus of their time and energy is on the construction of community among the poor. This leads religious to form a variety of groups for mothers, health care, youth and literacy training. However, for the religious the principal means for the formation of community among the poor is the *CEBs*.¹⁰²

This relationship between religious and the *CEBs* does not end with the disappearance of the small communities. The liberative *comunidades insertas* have the same appreciation for the base communities and see them as an important part of their insertion among the poor.¹⁰³

p. 5-12. J.B. Libânio, "Called by God to Serve the People," in *Latin American Theologians on the Religious Life*, p. 109-110.

101 CLAR, *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR. Guatemala*, p. 54-110. At the Ninth CLAR General Assembly, all but one of the six reports from *comunidades insertas* discuss their involvement in the *CEBs*.

102 M. Azevedo, *Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil*, trans. J. Drury (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 1987): 35-36. A. Gregory, ed., *Comunidades eclesiais de base: Utopia ou realidade* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1973): 46-66. Gregory states the majority of *CEBs* are begun by priests or women religious. CNBB, *Comunidades: Igreja na base*, 11th ed., Estudos da CNBB 3 (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1977): 32. This CNBB report also stresses the important role which religious play in beginning many *CEBs*.

103 M.J. Rosado Nunes, "A vida religiosa nos meios populares. Constituição e significado, um esboço de análise," *Grande Sinal*, vol. 8 (outubro 1983): 565-592. Rosado sees the *CEBs* as the main center for activity by the *comunidades insertas*. C. Boff, "Pequenas comunidades na congregação e diocese," p. 142: "That is to say: the *CEBs* go together with the small communities [inserted communities-jk] and the small communities with the *CEBs*." Idem, "Comunidades inseridas, visão de conjunto," p. 35. Boff also sees a 'structural correspondence' between the *comunidades insertas* and the *CEBs*, both being expressions of a new Church model.

The importance of the *CEBS* for the *comunidades insertas* lies not solely in a historical connection but also as a means for the evangelization. Religious relocate to the poor areas of cities and rural areas in order to evangelize the poor in a manner which is joined to support for liberation. Yet religious soon discover that any evangelization activity faces a major twofold challenge. As outsiders, the inserted religious are unknown and need a place where they can meet people. Coupled to this is the difficulty religious have initially in understanding the poor's life and culture. The past formation and intellectual training of religious, instead of helping the evangelization, proves a barrier. Religious search for a place where they can slowly learn about the life and culture of the poor.

Inserted religious find in the *CEBS* a structure which can help them overcome this two pronged challenge. Through Bible reflections and discussions, inserted religious learn gradually how the poor understand life, poverty and day to day reality. It becomes apparent that the poor have spiritual understandings and insights which are profound yet rooted in daily life. Through participation in the *CEBS* inserted religious further have a structure which allows them to come into close contact with the poor and meet their families. And this contact is not restricted to members of the Church, since many *CEBS* have non-Catholic members. In this way inserted religious come into contact with men and women who have little contact with the Church.¹⁰⁴

From this contact with the poor, the evangelization activity of the inserted religious adopts a policy of networking with local organizations. The liberative *comunidades insertas* dedicate themselves to the liberation of the poor and see this as an integral component of evangelization in the context of Latin America. In the *CEBS*, inserted religious meet men and women who are active in a variety of local organizations. These organizations range from groups which support literacy training to others with a radical Marxist political agenda. During the *CEBS*' meetings, inserted religious meet activists from these organizations who discuss their goals and planned actions. Inserted religious cooperate with many of these actions and projects, seeing this as part of their evangelization. Thus the evangelization of inserted religious adopts a policy of networking with local organizations, enabling a broader religious presence in the life of the poor through participation in activities with little or no contact with the institutional Church.¹⁰⁵

The evangelization of the liberative *comunidades insertas* also acquires a different stress through participation in the *CEBS*. The inserted religious, as previously seen, have a strong motivation to witness equality with the poor as a sign of common brother/sisterhood under God. In the meetings of the base communities, inserted

104 M. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares*, p. 168-175, 189. A. Gregory, ed., *Comunidades eclesiais de base*, p. 46-66. The last mentioned book says that 37% of the *CEBS* surveyed had non-Catholic members.

105 M. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares*, p. 168-184. M. Azevedo, *Basic Ecclesial Communities*, p. 139-157, esp. 153-157. Azevedo sees a danger that this contact can lead some *CEBS* to a naive acceptance of Marxist ideologies.

religious uncover another dimension to this equality, namely the mutuality of evangelization. In discussion of Bible texts or actions, religious participate as equals with the poor. Through this participation, the religious discover that the poor's spiritual insights and experiences help bring religious closer to God. In effect, the poor become evangelizers of the religious through their life and faith. With this, inserted religious discover and stress that evangelization is not merely bringing the Gospel to the poor. Instead, evangelization becomes mutual, allowing the religious to evangelize and be evangelized by the poor.

The experience of equality in the *CEBS* has other effects. Inserted religious see the *CEBS* as a concrete model for a new Church, the Church of the Poor. In the base communities there is no hierarchy. Religious and lay participate as equals both in reflections as well as in responsibilities. Additionally the *CEBS* do not isolate the Christian faith from socio-political action. The *CEBS* do not just reflect on the Bible but also act in order to shape a society more in accord with Christian values. This leads to participation in a variety of political actions in co-operation with different popular organizations.

The *CEBS* not only allow an experience of equality and a faith linked to socio-political action but are seen by inserted religious as being a charismatic structure which allows for flexibility in ministry. In the base communities there is no expectation that the priest should fulfill all the ministerial needs of a community. Rather ministerial responsibility is shared with all and new ministries are created when necessary to respond to communal needs. Finally, the base communities makes the poor and their reality the center of the Church. Decisions which affect their local community are not made in a distant diocesan chancery but during the meetings of the *CEBS*. Through the base communities, inserted religious see a new Church of the Poor arising in which they actively support.¹⁰⁶

The *CEBS* also fulfill an important role in the renewal of Latin American religious life. Immediately after the Second Vatican Council there is an upsurge of small communities within the Church. One form of these is the previously mentioned small communities of religious. Yet small communities of laity also develop with a focus on Bible reading, alternative living or political actions. Many of these are inspired by the example of the Latin American *CEBS*, though others are independent responses by people searching for community in their lives.

In the context of this development, some religious wonder if these small communities of laity could not be considered a new form of religious life. These lay communities meet regularly to reflect on the Scripture and to form friendships. Their meetings and activities are fluid, responding to the changing desires of the

106 H. da Cunha, "Testemunho: Outro jeito de ser irmã?" *Grande Sinal*, vol. 8 (outubro 1983): 593-607. E. Hoornaert, "Comunidades de base: Dez anos de experiência," *REB* (setembro 1978): 474-502. A.M. Tepedino, "A mulher aquela que começa a desconhecer seu lugar," *Perspectivas Teológicas*, vol. 17 (1985): 375-379. The participants at this gathering of women stress the importance of the equality between the sexes within the *CEBS*.

members. For religious, these small communities of lay people have a freedom and vitality which they greatly admire. Sensing the lack of these qualities in their own religious communities, the lay small communities are seen as a clear challenge for religious life. For in these groups, men and women are living what religious make only claim, namely community rooted in faith which produces authentic fraternity. And for this reason some see in these lay communities a new form of religious life in its embryonic stage.¹⁰⁷

In Latin America the *CEBS* are viewed as providing this challenge to religious life. Religious compare the experience of community in the *CEBS* with their cloisters. This comparison highlights both the deficiency of their religious cloisters and positive aspects of the *CEBS*.¹⁰⁸

Contact and life among the poor makes religious aware that the poor have values which can enrich religious life and renewal. The *CEBS* become one place, though not the only, where religious learn these values which can advance the renewal of their life.¹⁰⁹

The *CEBS* have a special importance for women religious. For in the base communities, women religious discover their own abilities, the presence of women in the Church and their enforced absence.

Women inserted religious, like their male counterparts, are active in the formation and continued support for the *CEBS*. Yet for the women religious, this leads to an important realization not shared by the priest-religious. Having previously lived in strict internal religious communities, most women religious had no previous experience with pastoral work. After moving to poor parishes, the sisters discover that they have abilities previously unknown. The base communities are one area where these abilities are allowed to blossom. Women religious are active initiators of *CEBS* and participate in their ongoing growth. As problems develop, women religious learn that they can work alongside the poor to find solutions.

Most importantly, these abilities are revealed independent of subordination to a priest. Women religious and priests participate equally in the *CEBS*, shattering the traditional hierarchal (patriarchal) lines of authority which women religious had previously learned. Rather than being under a priest, women religious find abilities which are free and not subordinate to a priest.¹¹⁰

107 M. Delespesse, "Nieuwe gemeenschappen en religieus leven," *Concilium*, vol. 7 (september 1974): 113-126.

108 M. de Barros, "Comunidade religiosa e re-inserção," p. 114-123. C. Boff, *Comunidade eclesial, comunidade política* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1978): 60-61. Boff states that while the communities are a challenge to religious life, it is too early to say if they are a nascent form of religious life.

109 J. Tierny, "Comunidades de base: Um chance de renovação para a vida religiosa?" *Convergência* (1973): 298-301. H.C. José, "O religioso-leigo e as *CEBS*. Apenas uma reflexão," *Convergência* (1985): 559-562. Idem, "As *CEBS* como profecia eclesial," *Convergência* (1986): 185-192.

110 M. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares*, p. 243-247. M. Adrienne, "Agents

Within the *CEBS*, the women religious also discover a presence. This is the presence of women who are active in the base communities. Through work with base communities, women religious see that women not only make a strong presence within the liberation organizations but also are active in a variety of Church groups. The base communities reveal to women religious the power of women, both socially and within the Church.¹¹¹

Finally, as women religious discover the presence and power of women, they likewise uncover their absence. Though active in liberation movements and ecclesial activities, women are absent from leadership roles in both.¹¹² This leads women religious to reflect upon their situation as women and specifically as women religious in a Church. Troubling new questions, especially after 1989, emerge over religious identity. These questions are not, as previously, focussed upon the general validity or authenticity of religious life but rather on identity of women religious in a Church, viewed as patriarchal.¹¹³

9.3 Tensions around the liberative comunidades insertas

There are many tensions which arise from every form of *comunidad inserta*. Exposure to the daily poverty, suffering and violence of the poor exacts a high toll emotionally, physically and spiritually. While tensions surround all *comunidades insertas*, there are several which are unique to the liberative *comunidades insertas*. These tensions arise not primarily because of life among the poor but because of the nature of the liberative *comunidades insertas*. As communities, they remain members of their individual religious congregations, yet introduce new insights and praxis into their life and evangelization.

of Change: The Role of Priests, Sisters and Lay Workers in Grassroots Catholic Church in Brazil," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 30 (1991): 292-311. This is a study of the *CEBS* in the state of Maranhão, Brazil, in which the author stresses the importance of the women religious. They have the free time which priests, through sacramental work lack and thus fulfill an important role in guiding the day to day development of the *CEBS*.

111 M. Rosado Nunes, "Popular Religions and the BECS in Brasil," in *Popular Religion, Liberation and Contextual Theology*, eds. J. Van Nieuwenhove and B. Klein-Goldewijk (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1991): 109-115.

112 M. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares*, p. 247-255.

113 D. Brunelli, ed., *A mulher religiosa nas CEBS. Presença e atuação* (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1990). This publication from the Brazilian Religious Conference is one of the few that specifically addresses the role and effect which the *CEBS* have had on religious women. CRB, *O sonho de tantas Marias* (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1992). A 1992 meeting of women religious in Brazil also reflects upon their identity and role in evangelization. I was told that most of the participants live in *comunidades insertas*. O. Gaio, "Vida religiosa na fronteira: A pastoral da mulher marginalizada," *Convergência* 26 (1991): 515-536. I. Gebara, *Vida religiosa da teologia patriarcal à teologia feminista* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1992). Sister Gebara has for many years lived in *comunidades insertas* in the North East region of Brazil.

For the liberative *comunidad inserta* there are three relationships in which these tensions are most apparent. In each of these can be seen a quest by a new form of religious community to adequately institutionalize its understanding of religious life and evangelization. A common thread which runs through these three relationships is an attempt to balance autonomy and dependence.¹¹⁴

Relationship to the charism of the founders

It has been shown that the liberative *comunidades insertas*, following the example of the earlier small communities, choose not to separate from their congregations but live in a radically different way. This leads these *comunidades insertas* to wrestle with the question to what extent they are dependent or autonomous from their congregations. This wrestling produces a tension with congregations which is most obvious in the intent of inserted religious to re-interpret their religious life. The *comunidades insertas* see the need to re-interpret their congregations' foundational charism and formulate a spirituality which flows from the experience of insertion. This re-interpretation leads to tensions with congregations in several areas.¹¹⁵

The source for this tension surrounding the re-interpretation of religious life is the charism of the founders.¹¹⁶

The phrase 'charism of the founders' is a theological term which is not found in any document from the Second Vatican Council. Nonetheless, *Perfectae Caritatis* does mention the 'the original spirit of the institutes' as one source to which religious must constantly return for the renewal of life (PC 2).

It is only in 1971 that the phrase 'charism of the founders' appears in an ecclesial document.¹¹⁷ In that year *Evangelica Testificatio* discusses the need of religious to return to the 'charism of their founders' (ET 11). For *Evangelica Testificatio*, this 'charism of the founders' consists of the: spirit of the founder, his/her intentions and witness of holiness and is further described as a guide for the renewal of religious congregations.

114 M. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares*, p. 226-240.

115 C. Palacio, *Vida religiosa inserta*, p. 40-43. M. Rosado Nunes, *Vida religiosa nos meios populares*, p. 185-191, 207-226. C. Boff, "Reflexões sobre a formação," in *Religião popular e Vida religiosa inserida. II Encontro das Pequenas Comunidades do Nordeste II*, ed. W. Mohn (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1986): 112-113. While not mentioning charism *per se*, Boff states that there is a difficult relationship sometimes between inserted and non-inserted religious. The inserted religious see themselves as bringing a prophetic challenge to their existing congregations.

116 C. Boff, "Comunidades autogovernadas. Autoridade e obediência nas pequenas comunidades," *Convergência* (1983): 40. Boff sees the clash between the congregational leadership which claims the 'authority of the instituted' and the *comunidades insertas* which appeal to a 'authority of the institutor'.

117 A. Romano, *The Charism of the Founders* (Middlegreen, U.K.: St. Pauls, 1994): 87. The first official ecclesial use of 'charism of the founders' occurs on March 31, 1969 in an address by Pope Paul VI to the chapter of the De Montfort Fathers and Brothers of St. Gabriel.

The most complete discussion of the charism of the founders occurs in the 1978 document *Mutuae Relationes*. There the charism of the founders is described as an: a) experience of the Spirit b) transmitted to the founders' followers c) which develops over time within the Church d) carrying with it a particular spirituality and apostolate and e) is the basis for a member's identity and that of the congregation (MR 11).

The charism of the founders is thus seen as being rooted in a tradition which begins with the founder/ess of a religious congregation. This tradition is not solely historical but acts as a living bridge between modern members of a religious congregation and their founder. Through fidelity to the charism of the founders, religious mold their identity and apostolic actions in order to share the same spiritual experience of the founder.

There is a tension which surrounds the interpretation of the charism of the founders by the liberative *comunidades insertas*. For *Mutuae Relationes* the stress is placed upon the accumulated tradition which each religious congregation has developed from its foundation. Through study and reflection, religious can identify the original spirit of their founder/esses and further their contemporary renewal. For the liberative *comunidades insertas* interpretation cannot begin with the past history since within the tradition are buried faulty and partial interpretations of the charism. Instead, the liberative *comunidades insertas* use the present as the starting point for any interpretation of the founding charism. Since a charism needs to be incarnated in present reality, the inserted religious start with asking how this can be done in a different historical context than their founder/ess' time. Through the praxis of religious for the poor's liberation, new questions arise which challenge traditional interpretations of the founding charism. In so doing aspects of a religious congregation's past tradition are recovered which had been overlooked or faultily interpreted. Thus for the liberative *comunidades insertas*, interpretation of the founder's charism begins in the present with praxis as the hermeneutic means.

Ironically, even with this critical view of history, the liberative *comunidades insertas* see that there is within the past of most religious congregations a tradition which can guide renewal. For the *comunidades insertas* this tradition is more narrowly defined than in *Mutuae Relationes* and reveals an option for the poor, which allows religious to renew their life by continuing the praxis of Jesus in history. In so doing, the liberative *comunidades insertas* reveal another departure from *Mutuae Relationes*. The past tradition of religious life as a source for renewal does not entail recovery of a past spirituality but fidelity to the option for the poor.

In their reinterpretation of religious life the liberative *comunidades insertas* also seek a spirituality of insertion. A new spirituality is viewed as necessary to explain the inserted religious experience of God among the poor as well as legitimate it in the face of critics. In order to formulate a spirituality of insertion these *comunidades insertas* go beyond the spiritual tradition of their congregations. They rely on reflections by inserted religious, contacts with popular religiosity and insights

from Bible reading among the poor. This effort reflects the same tension which is faced in relation to the interpretation of the foundational charism. Tradition by each religious congregation is no longer seen in terms of continuity but rather in a relationship which begins with the present experience of religious.

Underlying the efforts by the inserted religious to re-interpret their religious life lies a deeper tension, namely who has the authority to render such an interpretation. Religious congregations, following the line of *Mutuae Relationes*, see their present interpretation as legitimate, based upon the founder's charism which has evolved into a tradition. Yet for the liberative *comunidades insertas*, this tradition is never free from faulty interpretations of the founder's original charism and spirituality. It is, according to the liberative *comunidades insertas*, the Holy Spirit, who leads religious to discover and correct these interpretations through a life among the poor. The gap between these two positions, tradition versus the Holy Spirit's inspiration, is enormous.

Relationship to evangelization

Religious in *comunidades insertas* assert that any evangelization must include support for the poor's liberation. While some inserted religious work in parishes, their goal is not primarily to meet sacramental needs but rather to harness the parish for an evangelization which supports liberation. Yet for the liberative *comunidades insertas* it is the *CEBs*, not the parish, which are regarded as most able to unite evangelization with support for liberation. This creates a tension for the liberative *comunidades insertas* who must determine to what extent their evangelization is dependent or autonomous.

This liberation focus for evangelization leads to tension between the liberative *comunidades insertas* and bishops. The basis of this tension lies in two different understandings of evangelization. For most bishops, evangelization has to address the lack of priests and pastoral workers in Latin America, which results in improper catechesis and a lack of the sacraments for the people. Bishops see religious as having a duty in their evangelization to respond to this situation and address these needs. The liberative *comunidades insertas* have a different understanding of evangelization. For them, any evangelization by religious needs to go beyond sacramental ministry to include support for liberation. Only in this way can religious evangelize in a manner which addresses the needs of Latin America and make an eschatological witness with their life.

Thus the bishops and *comunidades insertas* have two completely different approaches to evangelization: pastoral based as opposed to liberation centered. And the tension which arises from this difference comes from the fact that according to *Mutuae Relationes* and *Christus Dominus*, religious are under the responsibility of the bishop in their work of evangelization.¹¹⁸

118 MR 18-23; 52-59. CD 34-35. W. Tepe, "Vida religiosa e igreja particular," *Convergência*

The tension between these two approaches to evangelization is highlighted in the person of the priest-religious. It is a common complaint that few priests are inserted among the poor and active in popular organizations.¹¹⁹ While this may be so, the complaint ignores the fact that priests, unlike lay brothers and sisters, are bound to the sacramental ministry of the Church. Thus even if a priest-religious lives in a *comunidad inserta*, he is always bound by an accompanying duty to sacramental ministry.

The stability of the liberative *comunidades insertas* is another tension which surrounds their evangelization. Life among the poor is a slow gradual process of learning the ways and culture of the poor. Time is also necessary before the poor come to accept and trust a religious. *Comunidades insertas* complain that this fact is seldom recognized by their congregations, which often transfer members too soon. These transfers are disruptive for the operation and effectiveness of the liberative *comunidades insertas*.¹²⁰

The basis of this tension rests upon differing criterion in evaluating evangelization activity. If a priest or sister is needed in a parish or for congregational work then it is seen as allowable to move an inserted religious to meet these needs. Underlying this is an assumption that it is good to limit the period in which a religious stays at one location. From this assumption, efficiency in answering immediate congregational needs and commitments becomes the criterion which is used for the placement of personnel in evangelization.

This criterion clashes with the liberative *comunidades insertas* on two levels. First, the evangelization of the liberative *comunidades insertas* is, for the most part, independent of congregational commitments. The inserted religious relate their evangelization to the needs of a specific locale, not a congregational pastoral institution. Second, the liberative *comunidades insertas* view efficiency as an inappropriate standard by which to evaluate their evangelization and inserted religious acknowledge that their life among the poor is inefficient. Having three or four religious live in a poor neighborhood restricts the number of people whom they can affect. Inserted religious acknowledge that in a large middle class parish they could reach more people and have access to modern media for catechesis.

(1988): 459-470. CRB, "Informe II seminário de estudo sobre vida religiosa inserida," p. 195-203. CRB, *Seminário nacional das comunidades religiosas inseridas. Setembro, 24-29 de 1979, São Paulo*, documento 12. Another side of this tension is that many inserted religious believe that the bishops only see them as pastoral workers.

119 "Informe de la Conferencia de Religiosos del Perú," in *IX Asamblea de la CLAR. Guatemala*, p. 325, 329. CRB, "Religiosos presbíteros," *Convergência* (1980): 482-494. In 1980, the Brazilian Religious Conference studies the priest-religious. It concludes that there is a tension between two different visions of evangelization which the priest religious must grapple: sacramental based and insertion for liberation.

120 J. Tierny, *Encontro da reflexão sobre pequenas comunidades religiosas directamente empenhadas na pastoral, Rio de Janeiro 13-18 de agosto 1974* (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1974), mimeo. Comunidad Oblatos del Corazón de Jesús, "Experiencia de inserción en Panamá," p. 20-21.

Yet for the liberative *comunidades insertas* efficiency in evangelization is often a reflection of a capitalist criterion which has little basis in the Bible. Therefore, rather than efficiency the inserted religious see fidelity as the criterion for the evaluation of their evangelization. And this fidelity is seen as to God and the option for the poor in a way which affects the way religious live their life and evangelize.¹²¹

For the liberative *comunidades insertas*, this fidelity includes active support for the poor's liberation, which can lead to participation in political actions. Yet this understanding of fidelity produces a tension between the liberative *comunidades insertas* and those of the contemplative stream. For the liberative inserted religious, there is a duty by religious communities to use their talents and resources in the poor's struggles. But the contemplative stream draws a clear line in its supports the poor's liberation. For the contemplative stream of *comunidad inserta*, participation by religious in political action is viewed a violation of its founder's charism. This creates a tension, though neither major nor often mentioned, between the liberative *comunidades insertas* and the contemplative stream. The basis of this tension is how one defines fidelity to God and the poor. The contemplative and liberative streams of insertion place different limits on this fidelity.¹²²

Relationship to the poor

All *comunidades insertas* strive for equality with the poor. This leads inserted religious to accept the poverty of the poor as well as enter into the life and culture

121 B Buelta, *El Dios oprimido*, p. 82. Idem, "La inserción y sus tentaciones," *Christus*, vol. 53 (diciembre 1987): 8-9 CRB, *Seminário nacional de CRIS, 13-18 maio 1988* (Rio de Janeiro CRB, 1988) 37-41 mimeo A Zenteno, "O cristão e o Evangelho na nova espiritualidade a partir da experiência," *Grande Sinal*, vol. 39 (janeiro-fevereiro 1985): 19-36 S Galilea, "Radical Following of Christ," in *Latin American Theologians on Religious Life* (Quezon City Claretian Publications, 1989) 23-24. M Lenz, "Dimensão social da inserção," p. 286 Lenz mentions the problem which transfers can cause to *comunidades insertas*. He wonders if religious congregations don't need to abandon their assumption that the frequent re-location of religious is necessary. Galilea notices this tension but identifies it as the relationship between a poverty witness and evangelization. While praising the lifestyle of the *comunidades insertas*, he questions if evangelization would not be harmed if all religious live such a life. Galilea's concern is that in the modern world, evangelization is complex and demands media and means which are incompatible with a poor lifestyle. He finally states, "I wonder if we should not look for other modes of poverty compatible with efficiency in mission, but not appreciated much until now."

122 B Rengifo, "Experiencia religiosa en poblaciones," *Pastoral popular*, vol. 39 (1988): 38. In this reflection a Chilean sister tells how in 1972 she split with another religious. The cause of this split was that the other sister wished to enter into insertion for contemplative reasons and had no wish to join socio-political actions. L M Alves Sartori, "Testemunho e ação de religioso na evangelização do mundo do trabalho," *Convergência* (1977): 465-477. Sartori, who lives inserted in a working class area of São Paulo, believes that workers expect more from religious than a contemplative presence as practiced by the Little Brothers and Little Sisters.

of the poor. They do this as a part of the religious' eschatological witness, and, for most, also for evangelization. Yet this quest for equality produces very unique tensions for the liberative *comunidades insertas*, who struggle for clarity in how they are dependent or autonomous in their relationship with the poor. There are several areas in which this is apparent.

The inserted religious seek a new approach to evangelization which goes beyond meeting the sacramental needs of the poor. Yet it is sometimes clear that this approach does not fit the expectations of the poor who would rather that religious focus on providing the Mass and catechesis in the faith. An example of this is found in the 1986 CLAR General Board Meeting when an Nicaraguan *comunidad inserta* of Capuchins reports on its life within a government agricultural collective. They define their work of evangelization primarily through a life of insertion among the people and manual labor on the collective farm like everyone else. While the inserted religious occasionally celebrate Mass, their work on the farm leaves little time for traditional sacramental or catechetical activity. But the other members of the collective expect the priests to provide regular Mass and catechesis. After discussions, the *comunidad inserta* eventually reaches an agreement with the people. Nonetheless, this case highlights a tension in the *comunidades insertas*, namely to what extent does a community define itself and its evangelization in terms of equality with the poor.¹²³

This tendency to seek equality with the poor manifests itself in other ways. Inserted religious living in remote rural areas or on the peripheries of large urban areas are often far from resident priests. Because of this, Mass is infrequent and rarely is there a possibility for daily celebrations. Since most inserted religious are female, they share this condition with the poor. For some inserted religious, this sharing in the poor's lack of the Eucharist is not seen as a sacrifice but leads to a new spiritual understanding which downplays the importance of the Eucharist in their religious life. For these religious spiritual nourishment is found not in Eucharist but in celebrations with the poor or Bible readings.¹²⁴

123 "Informe de Nicaragua," in *XXI Junta Directiva de la CLAR*. Buenos Aires, p. 100-107. F. Armand "Origen y motivación de nuestra comunidad - Haiti," in *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR*. Guatemala, abril 13-23 de 1985 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1985): 68. A similar tension is faced by this de Foucauld inspired congregation. While the poor respect the religious, they still wish that the community would become involved in parish work.

124 Hermanas Salesianas et al., "La vida eucarística en comunidades religiosas del Brasil," *Boletín CLAR* 24:1 (enero 1986): 3-10. "Comunicação de experiência," *Convergência* (1981): 603. This is a formation community of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery where Eucharist is celebrated once a week. M. Rosado Nunes, "Rezar com os pés no chão," p. 428. Rosado quotes an inserted sister: "In truth, actually, with the modifications occurring in the action of the Church it is a privilege to participate in the community, in the 'Bible circle', more than an individualistic sacramental practice, with no connection to a group."

This de-emphasis of the Eucharist's importance for religious life leads to tension. Traditionally the Eucharist is seen as the spiritual foundation for religious life, individually and communally. This understanding is also codified in the Church's canon law which obligates daily Mass for religious.¹²⁵

Seeking equality with the poor also leads to new tensions around the identity of religious life. For some, especially women religious, the experience in a liberative *comunidad inserta*, leads to a re-thinking of their identity. They see how religious life, male and female, has become clericalized causing religious to define themselves by stressing how they differ from the laity. Working with the poor, inserted religious find the common elements which link their lives to the laity. This leads to a shift in focus. Inserted religious no longer define their identity in terms of contrast with laity but rather in terms of the duty which everyone has to follow Jesus in life and praxis.

This new focus ironically raises new tensions around the issue of religious life identity. But, unlike previous discussions, now the tension is if, in fact, religious life has a unique identity. After 1989, increasing numbers of religious women become convinced that religious life is lay with lifestyle as the only difference between religious and others.¹²⁶

All *comunidades insertas* strive to enter fully into the cultures and life of the poor. This is another expression of the desire to be equal with the people in their life, yet for the liberative *comunidad inserta* two problems plague this inculturation. First, the intent of the liberative *comunidades insertas* reflect an ambiguity regarding the poor's culture; they seek simultaneously integration and to be an agent for change. This dichotomy, integration and desire for change, is clearest in the relation to popular religion. Religious participate in the poor's religious practices while simultaneously seeking to purify these of aspects which are viewed as oppressive. The tension which this creates is how to balance the desire for equality with the need to change some elements in the poor's culture.¹²⁷

125 R. Guerre, "Nossa vida comunitária," *Convergência* (1985). 247-257. Hermanas Salesianas, "La vida eucarística en comunidades religiosas insertas," p. 3-10. M. J. Rosado Nunes, "Rezar com os pés no chão," p. 467-468. The sensitivity of this issue is indicated by the fact that one entire issue of *Boletín CLAR* is devoted to it. Guerre mentions that canon law (at least in 1983) required religious communities to daily celebrate the Eucharist.

126 D. Brunelli, ed., *A mulher religiosa nas CEBS*, p. 39-40, 53. C. Boff, "Reflexão teológica sobre a experiência de Deus," p. 109. W. Tepe, "A vida religiosa e igreja particular," p. 467-468. This quest for equality with the poor results sometimes in conflict with other religious and the hierarchy. One example of this is Bishop Tepe, from Brazil, who comments on the *comunidades insertas* in his diocese. He strongly criticizes their desire for what he sees as an unrealistic desire for equality with the poor. Tepe tells of one inserted religious community which refused to have a house chapel or daily Mass because these are unavailable to the poor.

127 W. Mohn, ed., *Religião popular e vida religiosa inserida*, p. 87-88. "Proceso de formación en área indígena. Experiencia no. 2," in *X Asamblea General de la CLAR Cochabamba, junio 1-10 de 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988). 216. This report from a *comunidad inserta*

A second tension around inculturation by inserted religious affects their internal life. Acknowledging that their religious congregations are West and Southern European in spirituality, *comunidades insertas* see their distance from the Latin American people. This distance is not temporary but has been concretely built into the structures of each religious congregation and its formation programs. The desire by the liberative *comunidades insertas* leads to a tension over how much the existing religious congregations are able to be incultured. Will inculturation in the poor's culture demand acceptance of radically new internal structures of religious life? And if so, how can this be accomplished within the existing religious congregations?¹²⁸

among an indigenous community in Guatemala shows the complexity of inculturation. This community of women religious live among an indigenous tribe and seek to inculturate themselves. However, they soon discover that their presence alone brings cultural change for, as single women, the sisters model a freedom of choice which is unavailable in the local culture. This presence by the sisters raises previously undreamed of questions for the native women.

128 CRB, *Seminário nacional do GRS, 13-18 maio 1988, Salvador*, p. 34. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, Colección CLAR 46 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1981): 74-89. M. Agudelo, *La inserción y la inculturación de la vida religiosa*, p. 36.

Part IV

Reflections of CLAR and its theologians between Puebla and the Vatican intervention (1979-1989)

Introduction

Following the examination of the *comunidades insertas*, the study now refocuses attention on the CLAR's continuing reflection on religious life and evangelization from 1979 until 1989. During this ten year period CLAR is principally concerned with the active reception of Puebla. Also important, though given less attention is the 1983 call by Pope John Paul II for a New Evangelization. CLAR receives Puebla and interprets the Pope's call for a New Evangelization in continuity with its pre-Puebla understandings of religious life and evangelization as well as in the light of the praxis of the *comunidades insertas*.

Part IV examines CLAR's reflections from the Puebla bishops conference (1979) until the first Vatican intervention into the government of CLAR (1989). Chapter 10 examines the reception of Puebla, which CLAR interprets as a confirmation of its theology of religious life and a call for a liberating evangelization. Following this examination, Chapter 11 analyzes several themes which become important within CLAR reflections. Though some of these themes appeared before Puebla, they are now given new importance, as problems which arise from the experience of the *comunidades insertas*.

Two poles of CLAR's reflections

There are two poles around which the reflections of CLAR revolve in the period between Puebla and the first intervention into CLAR. These are: continuity with prior reflections and the *comunidades insertas*.

Continuity with CLAR's pre-Puebla reflections can be seen through an acceptance and lack of change in previous understandings of religious life. This continuity is recognized in 1984 by CLAR Secretary General Hermengarda Martins. She says that:

"Its [CLAR's-jk] Magna Carta, the essence of its spirituality is found in '*La vida según el Espíritu en América Latina*'. And with that ideology CLAR was present, active, clear and free at Medellín and Puebla."¹

1 H.A. Martins, "Amigo lector," *Boletín CLAR* 21:12 (diciembre 1983): 2; ("Su CARTA MAGNA, la esencia de su espiritualidad, se encuentra en '*La vida según el espíritu en las comunidades religiosas de América Latina*'. Y con esa 'ideología' fue la CLAR presencia activa, clara y libre en Medellín y Puebla"). Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed., *Hacia una vida religiosa latinoamericana. Selección de textos teológicos*, (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service,

Thus the basic understandings of religious life found in *La vida según el Espíritu* are maintained after Puebla. Religious life is seen as grounded in an experience of God which is most present among the poor. This experience of God leads religious to following Jesus and modelling one's praxis to His. The consecration of religious is viewed as a public commitment to live the baptismal commitment in a radical, prophetic way which is inseparable from mission. The evangelical counsels are not understood as the basis of religious life but as a means by which the eschatological witness and the need for incarnation in the world are balanced. Evangelical poverty demands material poverty and should be a sign of solidarity with the poor. Finally, the community remains the central focus for the public witness by religious.

During this post-Puebla period, CLAR's reflections on evangelization are also marked by continuity. The focus remains on the need for a liberating evangelization which is based in the option for the poor. In order to develop a liberating evangelization, there is continuing interest to change many existing structures of evangelization, especially the schools and parishes, in order to respond to the needs of the poor. The *CEBs* remain as a favored structure for evangelization because they are seen as allowing the evangelization of the poor in a way which joins faith to socio-political conscientization. Finally, there is a continuing awareness of how the social reality of dependency affects ecclesial structures. A new Church is seen as necessary, a Church of the Poor.

Coupled to the importance of *La vida según el Espíritu* is the prominence given to the liberating *comunidades insertas* in CLAR's post-Puebla reflections. Arising from concern at the 1982 General Assembly,² CLAR begins to closely watch the growth and development of these communities. This leads to support for the *comunidades insertas* at the 1984 CLAR General Board Meeting (Fortaleza, Brazil)³ which is ratified at the 1985 CLAR General Assembly (Guatemala) which says:

"As a fruit of our common reflection, CLAR and the national conferences welcome now the richness and originality of the inserted religious life and plan to contribute in the following years a service to the ecclesial and religious community with diverse works."⁴

1987). The continued importance of *La vida según el Espíritu* can also be seen in *Hacia una vida religiosa latinoamericana*. Issued in 1984 to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of CLAR, it stresses the principal themes from *La vida según el Espíritu*: the experience of God, following Jesus, religious consecration-mission, the evangelical counsels, charism, and community life.

2 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Síntesis de los informes 1 de las conferencias nacionales," in *VIII Asamblea General Paraguay, abril 1982*, vol. 2 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1982): 19-20.

3 CLAR, "Comunión e Inserción. Comunicado a los religiosos del América Latina del XX Junta Directiva," *Boletín CLAR* 22:4-5 (abril-mayo 1984): 23-25.

4 CLAR, "Camino de comunión-inserción o encarnación de la vida religiosa en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 23:4 (abril-mayo 1985): 5; ("Como fruto de nuestra común reflexión, la CLAR y sus Conferencias Nacionales recogemos ahora la riqueza y originalidad de la vida religiosa inserta y nos proponemos aportar en los próximos años un servicio a la comunidad eclesial

CLAR's support for the *comunidades insertas* results in their becoming the generator of the major questions and themes which CLAR treats after Puebla. As CLAR Secretary General Hermengarda Martins states:

"The reason of being of the conferences and CLAR, which has become the institutional objective, is the new religious life, inserted among the poor."⁵

From CLAR's support for the *comunidades insertas*, interest develops over a variety of questions, problematic for these communities. These issues include: the charism of the founders, a spirituality of insertion, inculturation, the identity of the priest-religious, and authority in religious life.

The *comunidades insertas* also provide the themes for CLAR gatherings. The 1984 Twentieth General Board Meeting deals with 'Communion and Insertion' (Fortaleza, Brazil); the 1985 Ninth General Assembly has as a theme 'Insertion or Incarnation of the Religious Life in Latin America' (Guatemala); the 1986 Twenty-first General Board Meeting focuses on the 'Spirituality of Insertion' (Buenos Aires, Argentina); and the 1988 Tenth General Assembly treats 'Formation for Evangelizing Mission' (Cochabamba, Bolivia). The effect of these CLAR gatherings is to bring the *comunidades insertas* increasingly into the spotlight for religious throughout Latin America.⁶

Socio-political context: From National Security system to neo-liberalism

Prior to Puebla, CLAR accepted the dependency theory and a vision of the Latin American social reality which is filled with conflict. After Puebla, as CLAR looks at international events its conviction is strengthened that Latin America is ensnared by international structures of dependency. It sees the continuing violence of the National Security regimes which dominate the Latin American continent. A high point of terror is reached in the early 1980s when coups in Bolivia and Guatemala bring dictators to power who ruthlessly suppress opposition. Many people are murdered, among them priests and religious.⁷

y religiosa, con diversas tareas..."). These contributions include support for: a spirituality from insertion, help with questions flowing from inculturation and insertion, dialogue with non-inserted religious, formation in the *comunidades insertas* and help in the analysis of the socio-political and economic reality.

5 H.A. Martins, "Informe del secretariado general," *Boletín CLAR* 23:4 (abril-mayo 1985): 24; ("Por ello la razón de ser de las Conferencias y de la CLAR lo que va convirtiendo en el objetivo institucional, es la nueva vida religiosa inserta en los medios pobres").

6 H.A. Martins, "Memoria del secretariado general 1985-1988. Documento 8," in *X Asamblea General de la CLAR. Cochabamba, junio 1-10 de 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988): 10-11.

7 "Bolivia - La conferencia de religiosos ante la situación política," *Boletín CLAR* 28:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1980): 28. "Declaración de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 19:6 (junio 1981): 22. This is a public letter from CLAR about the disappearance of Jesuit Father Luis Eduardo Pellecer Paena (Guatemala). M. Perdí, "Informe del presidente y secretariado CLAR [XVIII Junta Directiva, Quito]," *Boletín CLAR* 19:3 (marzo 1981): 4. "Noticias," *Boletín CLAR* 21:3-4 (marzo-abril 1983): 20, 24. This announcement tells of the disappearance of Salesian Father Gerard Du Clerville (Haiti) and the expulsion of three missionary priests from Chile.

CLAR also sees events in Central America as proof of the power of dependent social structures and their ability to resist change. After the victory of the Sandinistas, the new government soon finds itself again at war only this time with the *contras*, supplied by the United States government. The pain and suffering of Nicaragua continues. War also mars El Salvador where a civil war pits a military government against guerilla forces. Once again, the United States' government becomes involved, lavishly financing El Salvador's military.⁸ Many priests and religious become casualties in this war and the right wing death squads. Among the most renowned victims are Rutilio Grande, Bishop Oscar Romero and the four American sisters. Persecution and martyrdom in the defence of the poor becomes a reality for many religious.⁹

While the violence in Central America continues until the early 1990s, the situation slowly changes in other nations. After 1981, the power of the military regimes slowly wanes, giving way to democratic civilian governments, which end most of the violent repression. Accompanying this change to civilian rule is a shift from national security as defining government policy to the need for an adaptation to international capitalism. This policy, called neo-liberalism, declares that the improvement of Latin America can occur through increased capital investment by multinational corporations, privatization of government corporations and 'free trade', as defined by the North.¹⁰

While the violent repression ends in most Latin American countries, basic realities remain unchanged. Enormous inequalities between the rich and poor are not overcome as the majority of the people still live in misery. Not only does the poor's situation not improve but under the policy of neo-liberalism their lot further deteriorates.¹¹

8 M. Perdíá, "Informe del presidente [XIX Junta Directiva, Puerto Rico]," *Boletín CLAR* 21:5 (mayo 1983): 5-6.

9 Bishop A. Rivera Damas (El Salvador), "Comunicado del obispo, administrador apostólico, sacerdotes y religiosos de la Arquidiócesis de San Salvador," *Boletín CLAR* 19:2 (febrero 1981): 13-15. A Jesuit Luis Alberto Restrepo, active in CLAR, is arrested in Colombia in 1979 on a charge of aiding terrorists. CLAR Secretary General, Avelino Fernandez, writes a letter of protest. It appears in *SEDOC* (novembro 1979): 485-487.

10 M. Perdíá, "Informe del presidente [XIX Junta Directiva, Puerto Rico]," p. 5-6. L. Ugalde, "XXI Junta Directiva. Informe del presidente [XXI Junta Directiva, Buenos Aires]," *Boletín CLAR* 24:5 (mayo 1986): 5-6.

11 M. Perdíá, "Informe del presidente y secretariado [XIX Junta Directiva, Puerto Rico]," p. 5-6. L. Ugalde, "XXII Junta Directiva de la CLAR. Informe de presidencia [XXII Junta Directiva, Haití]," *Boletín CLAR* 25:5-6 (mayo-junio 1987): 5-6. Idem, "Informe de presidencia a la X Asamblea General de la CLAR [X Asamblea General, Cochabamba]," *Boletín CLAR* 26:7-8 (julio-agosto 1988): 5-6. I. Neutzling, "A modernização brasileira e a exclusão social," *Convergência* (1992): 226-227. Neutzling cites figures from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). In 1981, the poorest half of the Brazilian population earned 4.5% of the national income. By 1989, the figure is reduced to 3.5%.

Latin American economies face a new and more insidious threat, beginning in the mid-1980s. Debts accrued to international bankers and the IMF¹² by the military dictators prove impossible to repay. The result is that ever-increasing amounts of money are required merely to service the existing debt which everyone admits as impossible to ever retire. Latin American governments find themselves in a new form of colonialism with their financial policies, as well as their ability to meet internal social needs, increasingly dictated by international institutions.¹³

Coupled to this worsening economic situation is a changing internal reality in Latin American nations. Urbanization increases as the poor continue their flight to the large cities in search of employment. As a result more favellas, barrios and slums appear where the poor live in often unimaginable conditions. Along with the increasing urbanization is the lack of coherency of alternative social movements. Having suffered greatly in the 1960s and 1970s, many social movements are unable to adjust to the changed internal condition in their countries. Violent repression is replaced by a more subtle enemy, neo-liberalism, and its accompanying post-modern mentality. It proves difficult for social activists to mobilize the poor against this threat, less violent and obvious than the National Security regimes.¹⁴

Context of a changing Church

It is the Third CELAM Bishops Conference at Puebla (January 27-February 13, 1979) which is the key ecclesial event in Latin America before 1989. The preparation for the Conference and the gathering itself reveal a context of a changing Latin American Church. Changes which in some ways prove unfavorable to CLAR. In the preparation period for Puebla, it becomes clear that a battle is underway for the heart and soul of the Latin American Church. Rival theologies and ecclesiologies¹⁵ clash in the discussions over the preparatory documents. This clash is not, however, solely on the level of abstract theological dispute. Rather,

12 IMF = International Monetary Fund.

13 G. Iriarte and R. Antoncich, *El cristiano frente a la deuda externa*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie I, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988). L. Ugalde, "XXI Junta Directiva - Informe de presidencia [XXI Junta Directiva, Buenos Aires]," p. 5-6.

14 C. Caliman, "A Igreja na cidade," in *A presença da Igreja na cidade*, eds. A. Antoniazzi and C. Caliman (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1994): 7. Caliman quotes the 1991 Brazilian census that 75% of Brazilians live in urban areas. F.L.C. Teixeira, "As CEBs no Brasil: Cidadania em processo," eds. F.L.C. Teixeira et al., *CEBs cidadania e modernidade. Uma análise crítica* (São Paulo: Edições Paulinas, 1993): 19-24. Teixeira mentions how this changed political climate has affected the CEBs.

15 J. Van Nieuwenhove, *Church and Theology in Puebla. Thoughts on the Latin American Bishops' Message to the Universal Church* (Prospective International: 1980): 18. Van Nieuwenhove identifies two distinct ecclesial foci in the preparation for Puebla: one internal and a second centered on socio-political liberation.

it becomes clear that some bishops ardently want Puebla to not only modify Medellín but issue a clear rejection of the theology of liberation.¹⁶

Liberation theologians' concern and anxiety around the Puebla Conference increase with the announcement of the delegates for the gathering. In contrast to Medellín, most progressive bishops and all major Latin American theologians are not invited to Puebla.¹⁷ CLAR is also initially excluded from participation. However, through a last minute intervention by Cardinals Lorscheider and Pironio,¹⁸ CLAR is eventually permitted to send twenty-two delegates who, unlike at Medellín, are given only passive voice.¹⁹

Before the Puebla Conference, CLAR prepares a report on the religious life in Latin America for the bishops. In this report CLAR theologians cite the five tendencies which mark the development of Latin American religious since Medellín.²⁰

The Puebla Conference produces a single document which surprises many. Although complex and filled with often contradictory visions on the evangelization and ecclesiology,²¹ the Final Document neither condemns liberation theology nor retreats from Medellín's options.²²

In spite of this, the tensions within the Latin American Church do not end with Puebla.²³ Differences between CLAR and CELAM continue and, while not dominating CLAR's reflections, nevertheless remain a source of concern. Many bishops in CELAM still regard CLAR's theological views with suspicion, especially over the involvement of religious in political activities. There is also a continuing fear of

16 P. Lermoux, "The Long Path to Puebla," in *Puebla and Beyond*, eds. J. Eagleson and P. Scharper (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979): 20-25.

17 M. Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," in *Puebla and Beyond*, eds. J. Gremillion and P. Scharper (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1980): 28-31.

18 "Historia de un servicio," *Nuevo Mundo*, vol. 116 (marzo-abril 1984): 127.

19 L. Patiño, "Amigo lector," *Boletín CLAR* 27:2 (febrero 1979): 1. "Presencia de la CLAR en Puebla," *Boletín CLAR* 27:2 (febrero 1979): 8.

20 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Vida religiosa en América Latina - Aporte para Puebla," *Boletín CLAR* 16:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1978): 2-12.

21 Cardinal A. Lorscheider, "Síntesis del documento de Puebla," *Boletín CLAR* 17:8-9 (agosto-septiembre 1979): 3-16. Cardinal Lorscheider sees in the Final Document three different pastoral visions and approaches to reality: traditional, reformist and prophetic.

22 M. Sandoval, "Report from the Conference," p. 35-36, 40-41. Sandoval says that as much as 25% of Puebla's Final Document is written by liberation theologians, who while working nearby, are excluded from the official conference.

23 "Noticias," *Boletín CLAR* 18:7-8 (julio-agosto 1980): 29. This is a public letter from the Nicaraguan Religious Conference to Archbishop Obando y Bravo (Managua). It offers the services of the Nicaraguan religious for a planned CELAM catechesis course. P. Berryman, *The Religious Roots of Rebellion* (London: SCM Press, 1984): 246-247. Berryman describes this project, which has a budget of \$300,000 (US) and the fact that many suspect its real purpose is to undermine the Sandinista regime.

CLAR's continent-wide power as charges again surface that CLAR is trying to become a 'parallel magisterium' in Latin America.²⁴

These tensions are further aggravated by the changing ecclesial situation in Latin America. CLAR and the Latin American religious discover that increasing numbers of episcopal appointments are given to conservatives who oppose liberation theology. There is also pressure from the Vatican. Key liberation theologians are forced to defend the orthodoxy of their theologies.²⁵ CLAR President Luis Coscia in 1989 observes this changing ecclesial situation and states, "Sometimes a Church is experienced which is more defensive, more intent on orthodoxy and discipline...."²⁶

There are several attempts to address these tensions through increased dialogue and contact with the bishops. Several meetings are held with the bishops, the most important being a 1986 gathering of representatives from DEVICON and CLAR.²⁷ Proposals are also made by CLAR for joint studies with CELAM, although none is ever completed.²⁸ In spite of these attempts, the tensions between CLAR and CELAM are neither eliminated nor reduced and reach a critical point in 1989 around the *Palabra-Vida* project.²⁹

After Puebla CLAR is also interested in the Church's social doctrine and magisterial teachings on the religious life.³⁰ These are seen as needing interpretation in the

24 C. Palmés, "Informe de presidencia y secretariado a la asamblea de la CLAR [VII Asamblea General, Santo Domingo]," *Boletín CLAR* 17 3-4 (marzo-abril 1979) 9, 12-15. M. Perdí, "Informe de presidencia y secretariado [XVII Junta Directiva, Bogotá]," *Boletín CLAR* 18 5 (mayo 1980) 14. Idem, "Informe de presidencia y secretariado CLAR [XVIII Junta Directiva, Quito]," p. 6-7, 10. L. Ugalde, "Informe de presidencia a la X Asamblea General de la CLAR [X Asamblea General, Cochabamba]," p. 10.

25 A. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990) 16, 19, 219-223. At the initiative of Cardinal Ratzinger, Gustavo Gutiérrez is forced to defend his theology before the Peruvian episcopal conference, Jon Sobrino's Christology is investigated, and Leonardo Boff answers charges before the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome (1984). An attempt is made to silence Bishop Pedro Casadálaga and warning letters are sent to 8 other liberal Brazilian bishops. J. O. Beozzo, *A Igreja do Brasil* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1993) 255-290. Beozzo mentions the attempts by Cardinal Ratzinger to prevent publication of a book series, *Teologia e Libertação*, the closing of certain formation centers, such as ITER and SERENE, the removal of Clodovis Boff, Antonio Moser, and Pedro de Assis Ribeiro Oliveira from the theology faculty at PUC/RJ, the division of São Paulo archdiocese, and the increase numbers of conservatives who receive episcopal appointments.

26 L. Coscia, "Informe de presidencia CLAR a la XXIII Junta Directiva. El Salvador, abril 10 de 1989," *Boletín CLAR* 27 4-5 (abril-mayo 1989) 5.

27 CLAR and CELAM, *Evangelización, jerarquía y carisma. Primer Encuentro Latinoamericano de Obispos y Religiosos*, DEVICON 91 (Bogotá: CELAM Departamento de Vida Consagrada, 1987). DEVICON is CELAM's Department of the Consecrated Life. "Encuentro de obispos y superiores mayores de Centro América y Panamá," *Boletín CLAR* 27 6 (junio 1989) 13-16.

28 "Actas Documento 13," in *VIII Asamblea General de la CLAR, Paraguay. Abril 1982*, vol. 3 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1982) 6.

29 L. Coscia "Informe de presidencia [XXIII Junta Directiva, El Salvador]," p. 10-11, 20-22.

30 Especially important are *Laborem Exercens*, *Redemptor Hominis*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Redemptionis Donum* and the CRIS documents *Religiosos y Promoción Humana*, *La dimen-*

context of Latin America, demanding that they be read from the perspective of oppression and liberation.³¹ From this interpretation, CLAR theologians show that the social doctrine as well as magisterial documents on religious life confirm CLAR's positions.³² There is also a clear intent to show that the Church's social doctrine neither clashes with liberation nor can properly be used as an ideological legitimation of the Latin American social *status quo*.³³

Yet the Latin American ecclesial context is also filled with signs of hope for religious congregations. After 1975, there is an increase in religious vocations throughout the continent³⁴ and as a consequence CLAR devotes more attention to the issues surrounding the initial formation of religious.³⁵

sión contemplativa de la vida religiosa and CRIS' 1983, *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as applied to Institutes dedicated to Works of the Apostolate*. Additionally, the Sacred Congregation of the Faith's two instructions on liberation theology, *Liberatis Nuntius* and *Libertatis Conscientia*.

- 31 R. Antoncich, "Hambre de Dios, hambre de pan en el magisterio de Juan Pablo II," 25:11 (noviembre 1986): 4. Idem, "La primacía del hombre, respuesta de las cosas," *Boletín CLAR* 20:10 (octubre 1981): 3-15. Idem, "Presencia de los religiosos en la misión liberadora de la Iglesia," *Boletín CLAR* 24:6 (junio 1986): 3-12; (about *Libertatis Conscientia*). Idem, "La dignidad de la mujer," *Boletín CLAR* 27:3 (marzo 1989): 3-9; (on *Mulieris Dignitatem*). Idem, "La encíclica 'Sollicitudo Rei Socialis' y la vida religiosa en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 26:6 (junio 1988): 3-15. Idem, *Notas para una teología de la pobreza en la vida religiosa según 'Redemptionis Donum'*, Colección CLAR 59 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1987). Idem, "Mensaje del Papa a todos los religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 22:6 (junio 1984): 4-15; (about *Redemptionis Donum*). J.B. Libânio, "La vida religiosa a las puertas del año 2000," *Boletín CLAR* 22:2-3 (febrero-marzo 1984): 3-23; (on *Redemptor Hominis*).
- 32 G. Iriarte and R. Antoncich, *La enseñanza social del Evangelio*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie I, vol. 3 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988). R. Antoncich, *Temas urgentes de la doctrina social de la Iglesia*, Colección Perspectivas 17 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988).
- 33 Conferencia de los Religiosos de Puerto Rico, "Presencia de los religiosos en la actual coyuntura política Puerto Rico. Documento-Reflexión en torno al proceso electoral," *Boletín CLAR* 18:9 (septiembre 1980): 9. CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión sobre la respuesta de la vida religiosa en el hoy de América Latina [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," *Boletín CLAR* 21:4-5 (abril-mayo 1982): 16. One suggestion from the 1982 CLAR General Assembly is that CLAR initiate studies on the Church's social doctrine. The General Assembly sees this as necessary for several reasons: to highlight the positive aspects of the social doctrine, to address problems posed by Marxism, and to show that the social doctrine is not a barrier to liberating evangelization.
- 34 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos de América Latina*, 2nd ed, Colección CLAR 57-I (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1986). Idem, *La vida religiosa: Una opción para los jóvenes* Colección CLAR 57-II (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1986): 109. The number of novices is compared for 1965 (7,156), 1975 (4,424) and 1985 (7,323). H.A. Martins, "Informe de secretariado general," in *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR, Guatemala, abril 13-23 de 1985* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1985): 41. Both of these books are based upon responses from formation directors (and students in formation) throughout Latin America. While neither book explicitly says so, they are written by the CLAR team of theologians.
- 35 C. Boff, M.C. de Freitas, and C. Palacio, *Formación para la vida religiosa hoy*, 2nd ed,

CLAR's institutional initiatives

CLAR engages in a variety of institutional initiatives from 1979 until 1989. There is a continuation of the CLAR seminars and the addition of new topics such as social analysis and insertion among the poor.³⁶ The CLAR team of theologians also continue their work, reflecting on themes viewed as important for religious in Latin America.³⁷ The *Boletín CLAR* remains as an important channel between CLAR and Latin American religious and after 1979 begins printing some of its articles in Portuguese.³⁸

CLAR also launches several new institutional initiatives, the most important being the CRIMPO project.³⁹ At the 1979 CLAR General Assembly several national conferences express concern about how little practical support is given to the *comunidades insertas*. This results in increasing attention on the communities both by national conferences as well as on a continent wide basis by CLAR. At the 1981 CLAR General Board Meeting, the project CRIMPO is approved with two objectives. First, CRIMPO is designed as a practical way to assist inserted religious. CRIMPO organizes meetings in most Latin American countries for inserted religious so that they can support one another and exchange information on their life among the poor. CRIMPO's second objective is the gathering of reflections by inserted religious. These are then systematically examined for common themes and understand-

Colección CLAR 54 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1987). M. Perdí, "Informe de presidencia y secretariado CLAR [XVIII Junta Directiva, Quito]," p. 5. P.A. Crestani, "Una alternativa para los formadores," *Boletín CLAR* 20:1 (enero 1982). E. Royon, "El crecimiento de los jóvenes religiosos en la vida del Espíritu," *Boletín CLAR* 21:3-4 (marzo-abril 1983): 7-20. "1988: Año de reflexión sobre formación," *Boletín CLAR* 26:1 (enero 1988). CLAR, *X Asamblea de la CLAR. Cochabamba, junio 1-10 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988). Formation is also the key theme of the 1988 General Assembly.

36 H.A. Martins, "Informe de Secretariado," in *VIII Asamblea General Paraguay. Abril 1982*, vol. 1 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1982): 28. In this report for the VIII CLAR General Assembly, Secretary General Martins states that between 1979-1982 about 400 religious attend CLAR seminars (284 are women religious). H.A. Martins, "Memoria del secretariado general 1985-1988," p. 18-19, 38-41. Sister Martins says that between 1984-1988 there are 3,474 religious who attend CLAR seminars (1,430 in 1985; 939 in 1986; and 1,105 in 1987).

37 "XVII Junta Directiva de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 18:5 (mayo 1980): 16. H.A. Martins, "Informe de secretariado [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 26. Idem, "Informe de secretariado," *IX Asamblea General de la CLAR. Guatemala, abril 13-23 de 1985* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1985): 19-20. Idem, "Memoria del secretariado general 1985-1988," p. 19. Idem, "Informe de secretariado," in *X Asamblea General de la CLAR. Cochabamba, junio 1-10 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988): 33. Key members of the CLAR theological team after Puebla are: R. Antoncich (until 1989), N. Zevallos (1979-1985), S. Galilea (1979-1985), R. de Cunha (1979-1989), C. Palmés (until 1985), R. Muñoz (1979-1985), M. de Freitas (1985-1989). Some of the assessors for the CLAR seminars include: V. da Silva Moreira, J.B. Libânio, C. de Lora, V. Codina, L. Restrepo, C. Palacio, M. Agudelo, C. Caliman, A. Moser, C. Bravo, C. Boff, C. Maccise, and F. Taborda.

38 "CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 17:7 (julio 1979): 12.

39 CRIMPO = religious communities in the poor areas (comunidades religiosas en medios populares).

ing which can reveal a new spiritual insights into religious life and evangelization. CLAR seeks in this way to fashion a spirituality of insertion which can enrich all Latin American religious and provide a clear alternative to more traditional spiritualities.⁴⁰ As a further service to the *comunidades insertas* CLAR begins a new publication, *RETOS*, which is published only occasionally and offers a means of communication for inserted religious.⁴¹

CLAR's publishing continues and expands to meet additional concerns.⁴² Outside of *Colección CLAR* and *Colección Perspectivas* series, CLAR issues two books in 1988 on the life of St. Rosa Duchesne from a Latin American perspective.⁴³ In order to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary, CLAR releases a special anthology of past issues from the *Colección CLAR*.⁴⁴ CLAR's publishing seeks also to reach the poor. So that they can understand the changes in religious life since the Second Vatican Council, CLAR co-operates with CEP⁴⁵ in a series of three booklets, dealing with the religious life. Each booklet is simply written and presented with comic strip drawings.⁴⁶

Nonetheless the most important new initiative in CLAR publications is the creation the book series, *Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización*, which is designed to focus on questions surging from the praxis of the *comunidades insertas*. The original plan is to include twenty-four books in this series but only six are published before the 1989 intervention into CLAR's government.⁴⁷

40 CLAR, "Documento 6," in *XVIII Junta Directiva de la CLAR Quito, febrero 28-marzo 8 de 1981* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1981): 1-6. CLAR, "Documento 8-1," in *XIX Junta Directiva de la CLAR Abril 12 de 20 de 1983* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1983): 3. CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 11. This mentions the support for the CRIMPO given by the VII CLAR General Assembly in 1982. H. A. Martins, "Memoria del secretariado general 1985-1988," p. 41. CRIMPO seminars are attended by many religious: 472 in 1985 (from 8 countries), 129 in 1986 (6 countries), and 245 in 1987 (6 countries).

41 L. Ugalde, "XXI Junta Directiva Informe [XXI Junta Directiva, Haití]," p. 7.

42 Brazil and Brazilian theologians remain major contributors to CLAR's book series. Among the CLAR publications which are either written by Brazilian theologians or reprints from earlier CRB works include: *Colección CLAR* 49, 52-55, 58, *Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización Serie II*, vols 7 and 9, and *Colección Perspectivas* 6, 8-12, 14, 16.

43 R. Valdeavellano and D. Alexandre, *Una santa de contrastes para tiempos conflictivos* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988). M. C. Rondón Amarante, *Un perfil tallado en la esperanza* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988).

44 Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed., *Hacia una vida religiosa latinoamericana*.

45 CEP=Center of Studies and Publications in Lima, Peru (Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones).

46 M. Perdí, "Informe de presidencia [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," *Boletín CLAR* 23:4 (abril-mayo 1985): 17. In this report for the Ninth General Assembly CLAR President Perdí mentions that these booklets can educate the poor about post-conciliar changes in religious life. CLAR and CEP, *La experiencia de Dios*, CEP 66 (Lima & Bogotá: 1984). Idem, *El seguimiento de Jesucristo*, CEP 67 (Lima & Bogotá: 1984). Idem, *Iglesia y vida religiosa*, CEP 68 (Lima & Bogotá: 1984).

47 J. E. R. Valle, "Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización," in *El Riesgo del Espíritu*, *Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización*, Serie III, vol. 3 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 5-9. The original intention is to include 24 books in the series, divided into

Finally CLAR begins the project *Palabra-Vida* as its contribution to the commemoration of the fifth centenary of Christianity in Latin America. CLAR decides to avoid a triumphalistic tone for the commemoration and instead looks at the poor, victims of the initial conquest as well as the example of religious who defended them. From this decision, the *Palabra-Vida* project is born as CLAR's official contribution to the Fifth Centenary. The goal of *Palabra-Vida* is to advance the conversion of religious communities through a five year program of Bible readings from the poor's perspective on the Bible. This project flows from the experience of religious who had participated in Bible reading sessions in the CEBs. *Palabra-Vida* begins on the first Sunday of Advent 1988 but is stopped due to conflicts, which shall later be discussed.⁴⁸

three sections: a) the analysis of the Latin American socio-cultural reality; b) challenges from insertion (12 books); and c) the theology of insertion. CLAR, "Proyecto para los asesores teológicos de la CLAR (años 1986-1988) - junio 12, 1986," (Bogotá: CLAR, 1986): mimeo. This lists of some of planned books and their authors: 1) social reality (R. Antoncich); 2) cultural reality (U. Vasquez, P. Acevedo); 3) analysis of religious reality, i.e. popular religion and the sects (E. Valle, A. Salek, J. Cela, G. Iriarte, N. Zevallos, J. Mesidor, G. Midi); 4) spirituality (C. Bazarra, V. Codina, S. Ramírez); 5) insertion as a new form of following Jesus (C. Caliman, E. Delaney, V. Moreira); 6) historical and ecclesial experience of inserted religious (M.C. de Freitas, J. Dominguez, A. García, C. Palacio, J. Bormida); 7) conflicts provoked by the new image of inserted religious (C. Bravo); 8) inculturation and evangelization (F. Taborda, M. Agudelo, P. Trigo); 9) insertion and contemplation (C. Maccise); 10) tension in working with the popular organizations (L. Camps, J. Jiménez); 11) new perspectives on mission; 12) formation (A. Moser; and V. Moreira on a prophetic reading of the founder's charism). While most of these will never become part of the CLAR series, several will later be published elsewhere. M.C. de Freitas, C. Boff and C. Caliman, *Inserção: Novo modo de ser da vida religiosa* (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1989). F. Taborda, *Inserção e inculturação. Considerações teológicas sobre a força evangelizadora da vida religiosa inserida no meio do povo* (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1989). M. Agudelo, *La inserción y la inculturación de la vida religiosa en el pueblo* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1993).

- 48 L. Ugalde, "XXI Junta Directiva. Informe [XXI Junta Directiva, Buenos Aires]," p. 3-11, 14-15. CLAR, "Plan Global 1986-1988," *Boletín CLAR* 23:5 (mayo 1986): 16-19. The 1986 General Board Meeting approves the concept of *Palabra-Vida*. Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Proyecto 'Palabra-Vida' 1988-1993: La Palabra Convoca* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 9-14. C. Maccise, "La experiencia bíblica de Dios," *Boletín CLAR* 26:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1988): 4-21. CLAR with the Colombian Religious Conference (CRC) issues three books to help religious communities with the project: J.L. Caravias, *Biblia, fe, vida. Temas bíblicos*, CRC and CLAR Colección Palabra y Vida 1 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988); J. Saravia, *El poblado de la Biblia*, CRC and CLAR Colección Palabra y Vida 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988); Idem, *El camino de la Iglesia*, CRC and CLAR Colección Palabra y Vida 3 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988).

10 CLAR's reception of Puebla

10.0 Introduction

CLAR's reflections before the 1989 Vatican intervention should be seen as part of an ongoing process of reception and interpretation of the results from Puebla. Through this process Puebla is interpreted as supporting CLAR's understandings on the Latin American reality, religious life and evangelization. CLAR's interpretation of Puebla can be understood in terms of four keys: continuation, innovation, confirmation, and re-interpretation.

10.1 Continuity

CLAR interprets Puebla differently than the Medellín Conference. Medellín was seen as a radical break with the past, demanding that Latin American religious make substantial changes in their life and evangelization. This is not the case with Puebla. Within the CLAR discussions, Puebla is interpreted not as a break with past but a continuation of Medellín's options and choices.⁴⁹

This continuity between Medellín and Puebla can be seen in Puebla's view of the Latin American reality. Puebla rather than rejecting Medellín's view of the Latin American socio-political and cultural context affirms it. Latin America is seen as having 'institutionalized violence' (1259)⁵⁰ with social sin (28; 489) that is imbedded in unjust social structures.⁵¹ Puebla also continues Medellín's use of the dependency analysis,⁵² seeing Latin America as caught in international structures which impede development.

Furthermore, Puebla ratifies an inductive methodology of see-judge-act (*ver-juzgar-actuar*) in viewing Latin America. The Final Document begins with a pastoral perspective on the Latin American reality (*Part I*) which is then judged in the light of the Christian message. However, this pastoral perspective highlights a picture of Latin America which stresses the massive poverty, violence and lack

49 Cardinal A. Lorscheider, "Síntesis del documento de Puebla," p. 6-7. Lorscheider advises religious to read Puebla in the context of Medellín.

50 The numbers are from Puebla's Final Document, *La evangelización en el presente y en el futuro de América Latina*, and are those most frequently cited by CLAR theologians in their interpretations.

51 *Puebla* 30; 90; 509; 562.

52 *Puebla* 66; 417; 427; 501; 1072.

of communion among people. For some CLAR theologians this picture of reality is proof that the Latin American bishops adopt the perspective of the poor.⁵³

Continuation with Medellín is also seen in its treatment of the poor. Puebla affirms that the poor are a concrete social group who are oppressed (31-39). At the same time the poor have an evangelizing potential (1147) with a spirituality that is more than a distortion of the faith (450; 452). It is to these poor whom Puebla sees the Church as needing to convert⁵⁴ through the implementation of the preferential option for the poor, which is linked to the following of the poor Jesus.⁵⁵ It is this option which is seen by many religious as the key link between Puebla and Medellín.⁵⁶

Puebla also continues key insights from Medellín on the political and social dimensions of faith and the need for integral evangelization. Social action is seen as part of faith (476). Furthermore, Puebla states that the Church should denounce injustice⁵⁷ as well as proclaim the Gospel. There is also support for the connection between liberation and evangelization. Puebla declares that liberation is a part of the essence of evangelization.⁵⁸ To further reinforce its importance, the Final Document links liberation to communion and participation (482), one of the principal themes of Puebla.⁵⁹ Finally, Puebla affirms the importance of the *CEBS* as an important means of evangelization within the Latin American Church.⁶⁰

53 C. de Lora, "Puebla: Un horizonte de responsabilidad a la luz de Puebla," *Boletín CLAR* 17:5 (mayo 1979): 8-10. M. Perdí, "Nueva conciencia de la Iglesia latinoamericana," *Boletín CLAR* 18:2 (febrero 1980): 3-10, 16. V. Moreira da Silva, "La gran opción de Puebla y el mundo de hoy," *Boletín CLAR* 18:1 (enero 1980): 3-13. R. Muñoz, *Evangelización y liberación en América Latina*, 2nd ed, Colección CLAR 44 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1984): 35.

54 *Puebla* 1134-1146; 1156.

55 *Puebla* 190-191; 1145. CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 8-10. F. Carrasquilla, "Puebla," *Boletín CLAR*, 19:5-6 (mayo-junio 1981): 6-9. J.M. Guerrero, "Qué es y qué nos exige la opción preferencial por los pobres," *Boletín CLAR* 20:3 (marzo 1982): 3-9, 12-13. R. Antoncich, "Una vida religiosa por los caminos de Puebla," *Boletín CLAR* 17:10 (octubre 1979): 3-8. V. Moreira da Silva, "La grand opción de Puebla," p. 3-13.

56 "TV Interamericana CLAR. La vida religiosa en la Iglesia," *Boletín CLAR* 18:12 (diciembre 1980): 10-11. V. Moreira da Silva, "La gran opción," p. 3-13. M. Perdí, "Nueva conciencia de la Iglesia," p. 3-10; 16. F. Carrasquilla, "Puebla," p. 3-11.

57 *Puebla* 515; 748; 824.

58 *Puebla* 355; 476; 562; 1283.

59 L. Boff, "Puebla: Su espíritu y sus ejes fundamentales," *Boletín CLAR* 17:12 (diciembre 1979): 4.

60 *Puebla* 96-98; 261-262; 1309. C. de Lora, "Puebla: Un horizonte de responsabilidad," p. 8-10. L. Boff, "Puebla: Su espíritu y sus ejes fundamentales," p. 3-6. M. Perdí, "Nueva conciencia de la Iglesia," p. 10-11. R. Muñoz, *Evangelización y liberación*, p. 59-106. CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 9-11.

10.2 Innovation: The option for the poor for communion and participation

During this period, CLAR's reflections do not remain static. While there is some discussion of the option for youth and *ad gentes* mission, neither of these are given major attention and do not affect the basic understanding of religious life and evangelization.⁶¹

There is, however, a shift which occurs in CLAR's view of the Latin American socio-cultural reality. Prior to Puebla, CLAR focussed on the conflictive social reality of Latin America within which a separate world of the poor was identified that was oppressed by internal social structures and distorted by international dependency. Yet at the same time within the world of the poor CLAR saw a deep striving for liberation. In the light of this reality CLAR sought to adopt the perspective of the poor, seeing the continent through their eyes. After Puebla, CLAR retains this basic understanding but now there is a shift in emphasis, away from a focus on the unjust social structures to a utopian goal of communion and participation.⁶²

This shift is an innovation of CLAR's reception of Puebla which joins the option for the poor and the theme of communion and participation. While some theologians dispute whether the option for the poor or communion and participation is the key to understanding Puebla, CLAR joins the two. The option for the poor is viewed as the means through which communion and participation can be achieved in Latin America. This is important because communion and participation can be seen as expressing what most liberation movements want, namely the ability of the poor to share all the goods, material and cultural, in a society of equals.⁶³

61 E. Valle, *Juventud, análisis de una opción*, Colección CLAR 52 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982) "Los jóvenes El futuro de la familia humana," *Boletín CLAR* 23 3 (marzo 1985) C Pape et al, *La misión desde América Latina*, Colección Perspectivas 11 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982) "La Iglesia latino-americana y la misión 'Ad Gentes'," *Boletín CLAR* 19 2 (febrero 1981): 3-6

62 "IV Interamericana de Religiosos," p 10-11 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, Colección CLAR 46 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1981) 20-29. ELAMAR (Equipo latinoamericano marista de reflexión) "Lineas importantes de formación en la teología de la vida religiosa hoy en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 26 6 (junio 1988): 23-24 E Valle, "La evangelización como misión de la vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 25 9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1987): 13-14, 21-23 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 150-154 R Antoncich, *Temas urgentes de la doctrina social*, p 49-54 Antoncich cites Pope John Paul II in *LE 11* that a basic conflict between labor and capital exists.

63 In *Puebla 1153* a connection also is drawn between the option for the poor and communion and participation. One way to see the power that the concept 'communion and participation' has on CLAR is to merely look at the themes for its general meetings: the VIII General Assembly (1979, *Comunión-participación*), the XIX General Board Meeting (1983, *Una vida religiosa Servidora de comunión*), the XX General Board Meeting (1984, *Comunión-inserción*), and the IX General Assembly (1985, *Camino de comunión-inserción*).

An elaboration of this linkage of the option for the poor and communion and participation is given by João Batista Libânio and Leonardo Boff before the 1980 CRB General Assembly.⁶⁴ Libânio reviews the importance of the theme, communion and participation, saying that it can first of all be understood as referring to a utopia of God's Plan for humanity. As a concrete model for this utopia, Libânio points to the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles, where there was communion with God and a communal sharing of material goods.⁶⁵ This utopia of communion and participation also can be used as a standard to judge the existing social reality of Latin America. The oppression of the poor and their inability to actively participate in society as equals is a violation of this communion and participation which God wishes for all peoples.⁶⁶

Following Libânio's discussion, Leonardo Boff shows the link between communion and participation with liberation. In a social reality of oppression, the poor are prevented from full communion with others. They are seen as beyond the borders of society; their human dignity is denied; and social structures block their participation as equals. According to Boff, this reality not just places a barrier between people but also blocks communion with God for without love of neighbor, it is not possible to love God. Thus the social reality, lacking communion and participation, is also a theological problem as well as a sociological one.

In order to restore this communion with God, there must first be communion and participation in Latin America for all. According to Boff, this can only be achieved through the option for the poor,⁶⁷ for the option places a priority on the perspective of the poor and their needs. This inevitably must lead to the creation of new social structures which offer communion and participation for the poor. The option for the poor becomes thus the means through which communion and participation can be achieved in the conflictive reality of Latin America.⁶⁸

64 J.B. Libânio and L. Boff, *Liberar para comunión y participación*, Colección CLAR 51 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, study document for the 1980 General Assembly; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982).

65 J.B. Libânio, "Comunión y participación a la luz del designio de Dios," in *Liberar para la comunión y participación*, Colección CLAR 51 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 33-35.

66 J.B. Libânio, "Comunión y participación a la luz del designio de Dios," p. 33-37. Idem, "Comunión y participación como propuesta de acción," in *Liberar para la comunión y participación*, Colección CLAR 51 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, study document for the 1980 General Assembly; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 37-39.

67 L. Boff, "Nexo entre liberación-comunión-participación," in *Liberar para la comunión y participación*, Colección CLAR 51 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, study document for the 1980 General Assembly; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 47-49.

68 L. Boff, "Nexo entre liberación-comunión-participación," p. 47-48. Idem, "Liberación; Temática oficial de la Iglesia latinoamericana y universal," in *Liberar para la comunión y participación*, Colección CLAR 51 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, study document for the 1980 General Assembly; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 48-49. Also: R. Muñoz, *Evangelio y liberación*, p. 42-46, 70-78. C. Bazarra, *El riesgo del Espíritu*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie III, no. 3 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service,

The utopian/eschatological aspect of communion and participation is viewed as a powerful critique on the Latin American social reality. Commenting in his report for the 1982 General Assembly, CLAR President Perdíá says:

"Participation and communion which acted as a strong idea at Puebla continues being a remote and utopian aspiration, considered from the socio-political economic process of these last three year."⁶⁹

Similarly, the connection between the option for the poor and communion and participation is affirmed by CLAR. At the 1983 General Board Meeting (Puerto Rico), communion is made one of the themes for General Plan 1983-1985. It is stressed that this communion has a transcendental and historical aspect. All people have broken communion with God through sin. Connected to this transcendental aspect is the historical, through which sinful values are perpetuated in social structures which oppress the poor. In order to achieve communion in the transcendental and historical sense, sin must be overcome. To do this the CLAR General Board calls upon religious to opt for the poor and support their liberation.⁷⁰

Other CLAR meetings stress this connection between the option for the poor and the construction of communion in Latin America. The 1984 CLAR General Board Meeting (Fortaleza, Brazil) reminds all of the 1982 General Assembly's focus on communion. Likewise the 1985 Ninth CLAR General Assembly (Guatemala) states that religious need to adopt the option for the poor in order to build communion among the Latin American people.⁷¹

Social Analysis

This shift by CLAR to communion and participation as a utopia and goal for the actions of religious does not, however, diminish the importance of social analysis. In fact the contrary is the case, for social analysis is viewed as necessary in order to guide religious in the construction of communion and participation in Latin America.⁷² Thus, as before Puebla, social analysis remains a concern in CLAR discussions.

1988): 39. CLAR, "Comunión e inserción. Comunicado [XX Junta Directiva, Fortaleza]," p. 23-25. M. Perdíá, "Informe de presidencia [XIX Junta Directiva, Puerto Rico]," p. 7-9.

69 M. Perdíá, "Informe de presidencia. Documento 5," in *VIII Asamblea General de la CLAR, Paraguay. Abril 15-24 de 1982* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1982): 2.

70 CLAR, "Plan Global CLAR 1983-1985," *Boletín CLAR* 21:5 (mayo 1983): 10-12.

71 CLAR, "Comunión e inserción. Comunicado [XX Junta Directiva, Fortaleza]," p. 22. Idem, "Camino de comunión-inserción [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 4-5.

72 J.B. Libânio, "Comunión y participación como propuesta de acción," p. 38-39. L. Boff, "Teología de liberación: Iluminación y animación de prácticas liberadoras," in *Liberar por la comunión y participación*, Colección CLAR 51 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 59-60. A. Morales, "Teología de la liberación y formación franciscana en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 26:4 (abril 1988): 10-15. E. Valle, "Desafíos y tendencias de la vida religiosa apostólica," *Boletín CLAR* 24:4 (abril 1986): 12.

Once again attention is given to Marxist social analysis and there is evidence that it is used by some religious.⁷³ Roberto Antoncich is one of the few theologians who addresses the issue directly. He identifies as central the question as to whether the scientific use of Marxism is separable from its materialistic ethical aspect. According to Antoncich, Marxism as a tool for social analysis can provide a clear scientific view of the class conflicts within a society. Yet Marxist philosophy has an ethical view which links good and evil to class positions, which is problematic for Christians. However, for Antoncich, this problem can be overcome through the reference to *Laborem Exercens*. In that encyclical Pope John Paul II acknowledges the existence of social conflict due to capital and labor. But, for the Pope, the source of this conflict is not capital but its use for egoism and not solidarity. Thus while recognizing a conflictive reality the Pope states that this can be altered through the use of capital for solidarity among people. For Antoncich, this distinction by the Pope allows Christians to use the scientific results of Marxist social analysis as long as they see that the root of the class struggle lies beyond labor and capital.⁷⁴

The more complete discussion about social analysis occurs in three books from the *Colección Perspectivas* series. These books deal with the issue of social analysis in a comprehensive manner, using philosophy, sociology and psychology. Through reference to these three sciences, the goal is to clearly demonstrate that social analysis is inseparable from a philosophical understanding of the world, sociological analysis of structures and the psychological blocks which prevent a clear vision of reality.⁷⁵

The philosophical understanding of the world is important for any social analysis because it affects how a person understands his/her relationship with: self, others, nature and God. According to Libânio, there are three basic perspectives from which these relationships can be seen. A first perspective sees the world as stable and governed by rules which are beyond human control. Relationships are understood objectively as fulfilling a definite function which benefits everyone but

73 Escolapios, "Una experiencia de formación," *Boletín CLAR* 19:1 (enero 1981): 12. This is a report from a Claretian formation *comunidad inserta* which mentions the use of Marxist social analysis by some novices. This results in a clash with the provincial. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Fidelidad y conflicto en la vida religiosa*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 48 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1984): 45-46. There is a brief discussion of Marxist analysis which, according to the CLAR team of theologians, takes social conflict seriously.

74 R. Antoncich, *Temas urgentes de la doctrina social*, p. 55-57.

75 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 1. Aportes filosófico-culturales*, 4th ed., Colección Perspectivas 8 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1978; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1986). Idem, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 2. Aportes socio-analíticos*, 4th ed., Colección Perspectivas 9 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1978; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1986). J.B. Libânio and L.A. Monnerat Celes, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 3. Aportes psico-pedagógicos*, Colección Perspectivas 10 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1978; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1986).

which at the same time are marked by their regularity.⁷⁶ Another perspective views relationships not in terms of a stable order outside the person but rather makes the individual the key reference point. From this perspective, the value of the human person and subjectivity are emphasized as well as the co-operation necessary for any relationship. The world is seen not as governed by unchangeable rules but instead as open to future possibilities through the creative power of humanity to mold it.⁷⁷ Finally, relationships can be understood in a dialectical manner. From this perspective, the value of the human person is affirmed and a clear connection is seen between the individual and social structures. The individual is not totally independent from society because even a person's subjectivity is inter-penetrated by social structures. This is not determinism because people have the ability to change and shape these social structures which so strongly influence them. Libânio stresses this dialectical approach as the best manner to view basic human relationships because there is a recognition that people are both shaped by social structures but also have the power to change them.⁷⁸

Along with the philosophical understanding, sociology is also necessary. Relying on Juan Luis Segundo and sociologist Peter Berger,⁷⁹ Libânio treats sociological analysis as having an internal and external dimension. Neither of these can be ignored in the analysis of social structures.

The internal dimension deals with how each person has internalized the social norms, values and dominant ideology. Through this internalization a person is able to understand the world and know what is socially acceptable. However, this internalization also has one great disadvantage, namely that a person's perception of reality becomes locked within categories, dictated by a society's dominant ideology. In other words, a person's view of reality becomes trapped in an ideological circle through which experiences and events are interpreted in a manner that legitimates the *status quo*.

The recognition of this ideological circle leads Libânio to describe the relationship between theory and practice, praxis. His discussion of praxis is different than the earlier discussion in *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*⁸⁰ where praxis was described as having a dialectical relationship between theory and practice which flowed from a sociological and Christological vision. For Libânio, praxis can be analyzed in two interdependent manners: praxis in itself; and as Christian praxis. To analyze human praxis one must look at the actions and theories of free people

76 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 1. Aportes filosófico-culturales*, p. 30-51.

77 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 1. Aportes filosófico-culturales*, p. 52-72.

78 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 1. Aportes filosófico-culturales*, p. 73-93.

79 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 2. Aportes socio-analíticos*, p. 17-18, 97. Libânio refers to: J.L. Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, 4th ed., (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985): esp. p. 7-38; and three books by P. Berger, *The Social Construction of Reality; Sociological Perspectives, A Humanistic Vision; and The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*.

80 Cf. p. 94.

who wish to change reality. Behind these actions and practices are always sociological perspectives and/or ideologies which guide the action. Analyzing praxis as a Christian looks at a practice in the light of the Christian revelation in the Bible. This allows a Christian to make an ethical judgement as to whether a specific practice accords with Christianity. According to Libânio, within an ideological circle both manners to analyze praxis are closed and resistant to new interpretations.

Yet there is hope for a person to break free from the ideological circle. Since no one internalizes completely the social norms and dominant ideology, some level of suspicion and contradiction remains. This suspicion about the social reality or recognition of contradiction in one's life and praxis may be hidden even from the person and rationalized away. Nonetheless, the possibility exists for an escape from the ideological circle in order to clearly view the social reality.⁸¹

In order to break the ideological circle suspicion is first necessary. This suspicion is directed at one's practice and view of society as well as an uneasiness about the theological interpretations which justifies these. Specifically this suspicion is that an individual's praxis on a human as well as Christian level may not fully accord with reality.

Yet suspicion alone is insufficient to break free from the ideological circle. A person needs exposure to a new practice which is radically different. Afterwards, reflection on this different practice in the light of the initial suspicion allows a break from the ideological circle and a re-interpretation of the sociological/ideological theory underlying action as well as its theological underpinnings.

But a new practice's ability to trigger a rupture with the ideological circle is neither automatic nor magical. In order to re-interpret his/her practice, a person should have at least a minimum awareness that other sociological explanations for the social reality exist. Otherwise the importance of the new practice would not be seen nor the fact that it demands a religious to revise his/her sociological vision of reality.⁸²

Libânio then emphasizes the importance of social structures. They are not remote from people but provide identity and legitimation for groups. This must be remembered by any social analysis because it points to the deep-rooted power of all social structures to offer individuals both a personal and group identity. It also points to the reason why social structures are so resistant to change.⁸³

Libânio further provides a way to analyze the concrete social structures, using the pastoral institutions of religious as an example. According to Libânio, an analysis of an institution can be done on three separate levels: sociological; theological; and its functioning. He looks at the concrete pastoral structures, the sociological theories/theological views on which they claim to function and the type of people

81 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 2. Aportes socio-analíticos*, p. 57-65.

82 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 2. Aportes socio-analíticos*, p. 24-51.

83 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 2. Aportes socio-culturales*, p. 53-98.

who fill key positions. Then by analyzing the actual functioning of a pastoral structure, he asks how it fits with general social expectations. This allows a view of who are, in fact, served by any pastoral institution and whether its purpose is the maintenance of the social *status quo* or its transformation. Libânio also states that this reveals the hidden interests behind any pastoral action as well as the actual sociological and theological views of the institution. Through this analysis a pastoral institution can be held up against its theological claims to see if these are, in reality, the basis for its practice.⁸⁴

Finally, psychology is necessary for the identification of the internal forces which block an individual's openness to see the social reality and break free from the ideological circle. Influenced by Erich Fromm, L.A. Monnerat Celes identifies various mechanisms through which a person avoids facing the challenge of change. Through authoritarianism, a destructive attitude to self, and rigid conformity, the openness of a person to break free from the ideological circle is blocked. Through awareness these blocks can be overcome and the social reality seen, freed of the dominant ideology's blinders.⁸⁵

10.3 Confirmation of CLAR's theology of religious life

CLAR interprets Puebla as a confirmation of its theology of religious life and this is seen in various ways by CLAR theologians.⁸⁶ First, it is seen as an important confirmation that Puebla's Final Document adopts four of the five tendencies of religious life which CLAR had mentioned in its report to Puebla. The Latin American bishops point out that among the Latin American religious there is increased concern for the experience of God (726-729); community life (730-732); the option for the poor (733-735) and insertion in the local Church (736-741).⁸⁷ Not solely confirmation of general tendencies of religious life but Latin American religious find further support in Puebla for CLAR's theology of the religious life.

84 J.B. Libânio, *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 2. Aportes socio-analíticos*, p. 99-119. Idem, "Análisis de la práctica educacional," in *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 3. Aportes psico-pedagógicos*, Colección Perspectivas 10 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1978; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 58-95.

85 L.A. Monnerat Celes, "Análisis de los mecanismos de fuga," in *Formación de la conciencia crítica. 3. Aportes psico-pedagógicos*, Colección Perspectivas 10 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1978; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982): 21-57. Monnerat mentions three books by Erich Fromm: *The Fear of Freedom*; *Analysis of the Man*; and *Psychoanalysis in Modern Society*.

86 "Puebla: Confirmación y aliento a nuevas opciones de vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 27:7 (julio 1979).

87 C. Palmés, "Informe de la presidencia y secretariado [VII Asamblea General, Santo Domingo]," p. 4-6. J. Gómez, "Vida consagrada. Camino de liberación," *Boletín CLAR* 17:5 (mayo 1979): 3-7. V. Codina, "La vida religiosa en el documento de Puebla," *Boletín CLAR* 17:7 (julio 1979): 3-7, 12. J. Navarro, "Hoy anunciar el Evangelio es defender la justicia," *Boletín CLAR* 18:1 (enero 1980): 17.

Before Puebla, CLAR concluded that religious consecration and mission are inseparable. The religious consecration by religious was viewed as leading not to a flight from society but mission in it. This connection between religious consecration and mission, so central for CLAR, is seen as ratified by Puebla in two ways. First, in the Final Document the discussion on religious life occurs in the section on the agents of communion and participation, a central theme of the conference. Second, Puebla recognizes that religious life is "evangelizing in itself" (721) thereby stressing the link between religious and mission (743-745).⁸⁸

CLAR before Puebla had also seen the three evangelical counsels not as a rejection of 'the world'. Instead, they were seen as a means to balance the eschatological witness and incarnation in society while simultaneously providing a prophetic witness against injustice. Ricardo Antoncich sees confirmation of this position in Puebla which states that the evangelical counsels express the radical consecration of a religious to God and "consequently service to others..." (746). For Antoncich, Puebla also stresses the prophetic witness which the evangelical counsels provide in the Latin American context of social injustice (746-750).⁸⁹

CLAR also placed before Puebla much stress on the vow of evangelical poverty and fidelity to the option for the poor. Puebla is interpreted as confirming this concern. In the Final Document the observance by religious of the option for the poor is viewed as its "most notable tendency" (733). There is further support by the bishops for the importance of the witness of poverty (750), religious who live and work among the poor (121), and the *comunidades insertas* (731). Puebla is further seen as drawing a clear connection between service to the poor, flowing from the option, and the following of Jesus (743; 1140) who is described as having been poor (190). The bishops go so far as to say that service to the poor is the 'privileged means' of following Christ (1145).⁹⁰

The interpretation of Puebla as a confirmation of CLAR's theological positions on the religious life is also held by CLAR leadership. CLAR President Mateo Perdía voices this opinion before the 1979 CLAR General Assembly (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic), the 1980 CLAR Seventeenth General Board Meeting (Bogotá, Colombia), and the 1984 Twentieth Junta Directiva (Fortaleza, Brazil).⁹¹ President Perdía says that Puebla's confirmation of CLAR's positions "has given the religious of Latin America more security in the chosen road. It has also given CLAR more serenity in its objectives to serve the religious life...."⁹²

88 J. Gómez, "Vida consagrada. Camino de liberación," p. 3-7.

89 R. Antoncich, "Una vida religiosa por los caminos de Puebla," p. 7.

90 V. Codina, "La vida religiosa en el documento de Puebla," p. 4-7, 12. R. Antoncich, "Una vida religiosa por los caminos de Puebla," p. 3-6.

91 C. Palmés, "Informe de la presidencia y secretariado [VII Asamblea General, Santo Domingo]," p. 4-6. M. Perdía, "Informe de la presidencia y secretariado [XVII Junta Directiva, Bogotá]," p. 11. Idem, "Memoria: XXV años de la CLAR [XX Junta Directiva, Fortaleza]," *Boletín CLAR* 22:4-5 (abril-mayo 1984): 7.

92 M. Perdía, "Informe de presidencia y secretariado [XVII Junta Directiva, Bogotá]," p. 11.

The interpretation of Puebla as a confirmation affects CLAR's reflections as previous lines of thought are maintained. Special concern is given to religious in education⁹³ and health care⁹⁴ and how they can revise their activities to conform to the option for the poor. Nonetheless, these reflections do not change CLAR's basic understanding of the religious life.

10.4 Re-interpretation of Puebla

Within the discussions of CLAR, there are also several themes in which Puebla is re-interpreted. This re-interpretation can take a variety of forms from a variant reading of the Final Document to a subtle rejection of it on some point.

Option for the poor: Social location, conflict and conversion

With the acceptance by the Latin American bishops of the option for the poor, there is within CLAR a tendency to link it to social location. The option for the poor is not seen merely as a new pastoral focus or even a criterion from which all work must be evaluated. Instead, the option for the poor is viewed as requiring the Latin American Church (in general) and religious (in particular) to shift their social location so that it becomes "where the Church thinks, proclaims and lives the liberating message; it is from the poor to everyone else."⁹⁵

This change of social location is not just mental and spiritual for religious. Instead, some religious see the option as demanding a geographical shift to life among the poor. The reason for this is that the option for the poor demands the perspective of the poor which can best be obtained by sharing their daily life.

Jorge Gómez, a member of the CLAR theological team, states that the option for the poor "implies that we have an awareness of the poor. This awareness means:

- change of social location,
- change of spiritual attitude;
- change of geographical location which will lead to the previous two."⁹⁶

93 S. Vallejo, "El religioso educador y la escuela católica en un continente en cambio," *Boletín CLAR* 25 1-2 (enero-febrero 1987) 3-22. F. Varona, "Comunicación y pedagogía de la fe," *Boletín CLAR* 18 9-10 (octubre-noviembre 1980) 4-12. "En educación nadie tiene hoy respuestas," *Boletín CLAR* 17 12 (diciembre 1979) 7, 10. V. L. Herrero, "Paraguay asamblea nacional 1981. Educación y vida consagrada," *Boletín CLAR* 19 9 (septiembre 1981) 3-19. "La evangelización como misión del religioso en la escuela. Seminario de estudio sobre este tema organizado por la CLAR a nivel latino-americano," *Boletín CLAR* 21 8-9 (agosto-septiembre 1983) 3-19. N. Zevallos, "La educación popular en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 25 11 (noviembre 1987) 4-9, 12-16.

94 Equipo de pastoral de salud, *Seguimiento de Jesús junto al enfermo*, Colección CLAR 50 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1981). L. A. de Mattos, "La mística del religioso al servicio de la salud," *Boletín CLAR* 26 9 (septiembre 1988) 3-26.

95 L. Boff, "Puebla. Su espíritu y sus ejes fundamentales," p. 4.

96 J. Gómez, "Vida consagrada. Camino de liberación," p. 6.

Similarly, Sister Vilma Moreira da Silva, also a member of the CLAR theological team, says that "The idea of the preferential option for the poor is joined to social location; or better said, to a change in social location."⁹⁷

This link between the option for the poor and social location is stressed by others.⁹⁸ Increasingly, it is seen as necessary that religious adopt a new geographical location among the poor. The *comunidades insertas* are viewed as concrete examples for this shift in geographical location in fidelity to the option for the poor.⁹⁹

Puebla's acceptance of the option for the poor is also interpreted as an acceptance of conflict. An option for the poor, while not exclusive, makes a clear choice for the poor and their struggle for liberation. Such a choice will encounter opposition from the powerful who benefit from the *status quo*. For this reason, CLAR sees the acceptance of the option for the poor – by religious as well as for the entire Latin American Church – as involving conflict. Religious who opt for the poor also accept the conflict which flows from that decision.¹⁰⁰

This view is echoed in the CLAR report for the 1980 Fourth Inter-American Meeting of religious which states that, "At Puebla the bishops recognized that this option is not able to occur without serious tensions inside and outside the Church."¹⁰¹

Finally, the option for the poor is viewed as demanding a conversion by the Church and religious. However, unlike Puebla,¹⁰² the stress within CLAR's discussions is on the need for a conversion to the poor. This conversion is seen as requiring that the Church and religious "take the side of the poor and their struggles of liberation."¹⁰³

97 V. Moreira da Silva, "La gran opción de Puebla," p. 9; ("La idea de opción preferencial por los pobres está unida a la del *lugar social*; mejor dicho, a la de un cambio del *lugar social*").

98 C. Maccise, "Valores humanos y cambio social en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 25:3 (marzo 1987): 12. L. Boff, "Liberación: Temática oficial de la Iglesia latinoamericana y universal," p. 51.

99 J.M. Guerrero, "Qué es y qué nos exige la opción preferencial por los pobres," p. 12. CLAR, "Plan Global 1983-1985," p. 7-8. CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Santo Domingo]," p. 8-11. M. Perdía, "Informe de presidencia [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 13. At the IX CLAR General Assembly President Perdía states that the *comunidades insertas* have given a concrete expression to Puebla's option for the poor. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para religiosos*, p. 145.

100 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Fidelidad y conflicto*, p. 104-107.

101 "IV Interamericana de Religiosos," p. 11. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 148.

102 *Puebla 1134; 1140; 1157-1158*. All the numbers cited speak of the need for a conversion to the option for the poor, and *Puebla 1140* goes so far as to say that there is a need for "a fuller identification each day with the poor Christ and the poor."

103 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 145; ("Conversión a la causa de los pobres significa *hacerla nuestra, tomar partido por los pobres y por sus*

Evangelization of the political

Before Puebla CLAR discovered that all evangelization has a political dimension. Pastoral works could either advance social change or reinforce the *status quo* in a society which harbors injustice and repression. CLAR further recognized the power of the dominant ideology to influence how religious see the social reality to which all evangelization must respond.

After Puebla the political dimension of evangelization remains a concern and one which is often dealt with differently than by the Latin American bishops at Puebla.

Ideology

A first concern apparent in CLAR discussions revolves around Puebla's use of the term ideology (535-557). A 1980 reflection-document by the Puerto Rican Religious Conference mentions the discussion of ideology made by Pope Paul VI *Octogesima Adveniens* (OA 26-37), where a clear distinction is made between: philosophy, historical movements and ideals. Puebla does refer to *Octogesima Adveniens* and *Pacem in Terris* (Puebla 554 which refers to *pr* 55; 152), but, for the Puerto Rican religious, its discussion of ideology lacks clarity and confuses philosophies with their historical movements.¹⁰⁴

A second concern is Puebla's refusal to choose a clear ideology to guide political actions for social change. At Puebla, the Latin American bishops clearly condemn the national security, liberal capitalist and collective Marxist ideologies and support social change. But, according to CLAR theologian Ronaldo Muñoz, Puebla's failure to offer an ideology or alternative vision presents a practical problem, namely how to translate a desire for social change into reality. For Muñoz, an unambiguous ideological choice is necessary because any action for social change must be done through political actions, requiring "the solidarity of a historical movement, organization of parties, analysis and strategies that are formulated and share a mobilizing *ideology*."¹⁰⁵

A final concern is the relation of the Church's social doctrine to ideology. For some religious, the social doctrine is in danger of being ideologically manipulated in order to legitimate oppression. In the 1980 document by religious in Puerto Rico, this problem is mentioned. The social doctrine is seen as problematic because it is often used as proof of the Church's support for capitalism and

luchas de liberación"). It is worth remembering that the word *la lucha* is extremely controversial and viewed by some as a code word for a Marxist class struggle. It does not appear in the Puebla Final Document except in *Puebla # 544* which mentions that Marxism sees class struggle as the driving force of history.

104 Conferencia de los Religiosos de Puerto Rico, "Presencia de los religiosos en la actual coyuntura política," p. 7-8.

105 R. Muñoz, *Evangelio y liberación*, p. 95. Muñoz refers to Puebla (523) which he sees as using the term 'ideology' in this way.

opposition to any change in the social *status quo*.¹⁰⁶ CLAR theologians, especially Ricardo Antoncich, repeatedly emphasize that the Church's social doctrine accords with CLAR's policies, seeking liberation of the poor.¹⁰⁷

A related problem is the use of the social doctrine in the discernment of ideologies. For Puebla, the social doctrine is viewed as the standard against which any ideology should be evaluated in order to see if it clashes with the Gospel.¹⁰⁸ Although this is not directly denied, within CLAR the discernment of ideologies is not done through reference to the social doctrine but through praxis and social analysis.¹⁰⁹

The topic of ideology is an ongoing concern for Latin American religious. At the 1982 CLAR General Assembly there is a proposal for a joint study with CELAM on the relationship between ideology, ecclesiology and pastoral practices.¹¹⁰ Yet in spite of this concern there remain different understandings for the term 'ideology'.¹¹¹

Evangelization as contestation of the dominant ideology

In CLAR discussions, Puebla's call for the evangelization of the political is viewed as demanding a prophetic stance in order to challenge the dominant ideology. This prophetic stance pushes religious to denounce injustice and critique the thinking which legitimates oppression.¹¹²

106 Conferencia de los Religiosos de Puerto Rico, "Presencia de los religiosos en la actual coyuntura política," p. 8-9. C. Boff, "Evangelización, ideologías y política. Logros y problemas," in *Puebla. Panorama de la teología Latinoamericana V*, ed. SELADOC (Salamanca. Sígueme, 1981): 465-470. For Boff the bishops at Puebla see ideology in negative terms.

107 G. Inarte and R. Antoncich, *La enseñanza social del Evangelio*, p. 87-99, 135-160, 161-167, (treating private property, violence and resistance, and class struggle). R. Antoncich, *Temas urgentes de la doctrina social*, p. 41-64. Antoncich sees Marxism as presenting three problems for Christianity, which the bulk of the book addresses: the right of private property, social analysis and class conflict, and alienation. L. Boff, "Liberación. Temática oficial de la Iglesia latinoamericana y universal," p. 48-56.

108 *Puebla 538-540, 556*

109 R. Antoncich, *Temas urgentes de la doctrina social*, p. 35-36

110 CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 11. Idem, "Plan Global 1983-1985," p. 13. The recommendation is endorsed by the XIX CLAR General Board Meeting and appears in the General Plan for 1983-1985. Nevertheless, the study is never undertaken.

111 Ideology is understood in a variety of ways within CLAR discussions. R. Antoncich, *Temas urgentes de la doctrina social*, p. 27-28. Antoncich says that ideology can be seen as a way to orient political action which makes a transcendental claim (positive or negative), or as a guide to political action without such a transcendental reference, or as linked to a class project and location. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 104. Ideology is described as either negative (masking reality) or positive (enabling social action).

112 J.B. Libânio, "Comunión y participación como propuesta de acción," p. 42-46. Frei Betto "Asamblea Interamericana de los Oblatos de María Inmaculata. Reflexiones de Frei Betto,"

Religious can challenge the dominant ideology in a variety of ways. First of all, there is a need to unmask the dominant ideology and expose the values which underlay it. In this way people can see that the dominant ideology is grounded on values which are not only non-Christian but in many cases anti-Christian. But unmasking alone is insufficient, religious should also, as part of evangelization, introduce Gospel values into the political order. Through discussion and work, religious can help mold the basic theoretical concepts which underlay the socio-political order. In so doing, religious assist others in the acquisition of a vision of politics and justice which is more rooted in the Christian tradition. Similarly, an evangelization of the political cannot ignore the *utopia*, commonly held in a society. Religious should encourage the people, as well as activists in liberation movements, to dream of a new social order which is more just and free, rather than one filled with individualism and greed.¹¹³

Equality in evangelization Religious in political actions?

Before Puebla, CLAR treated as an open question the active participation of religious in support of political parties. Puebla (quoting *GS 43*) reaffirms Vatican II's recognition of separate spheres of competency for the laity and religious in the Church's mission. The political-secular reality is viewed as an area where the laity is competent and to which religious and clergy can contribute through guidance and advice (524-530).

For Ronaldo Muñoz, this separation is untenable since it presumes that the words of a religious in evangelization have credibility if unaccompanied by concrete actions. According to Muñoz, an evangelization of the political must not just offer the laity criterion for political action but also demonstrate a willingness to act alongside them.¹¹⁴

In a 1981 study by the CLAR team of theologians, the topic of religious involvement in political actions is briefly discussed. Religious are told that they need awareness of the magisterial teachings against participation in political party activities. The CLAR theologians then quote from the CRIS document *Religious and Human Promotion (RHP 12)* which affirms the common duty of all Christians to work for a society's common good. For the CLAR theologians, this work for the common good includes the creation of community, discernment with the people

Boletín CLAR 22 1 (enero 1984) 14-15. Before an assembly of the Oblates of Mary, Frei Betto says that religious should be a model of de-ideologized faith.

113 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 103-105. A. González Dorado, "Una pedagogía evangelizadora para América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 20 12 (diciembre 1982) 6-8. S. Gahle, *Espiritualidad de la evangelización. Según las bienaventuranzas*, 3rd ed., Colección CLAR 43 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1982) 65-72, esp. 69. C. Maccise, "Valores humanas y cambio social," p. 6-14. L. A. de Mattos, "La mística del religioso," p. 3-25. N. Zevallos, "La educación popular," p. 4-8. A. González Dorado, "Una pedagogía evangelizadora," p. 3-11, esp. 7-10. J. B. Libânio, "La vida religiosa a las puertas," p. 19.

114 R. Muñoz, *Evangelio y liberación*, p. 94.

and the need to "accompany in solidarity the projects of the most abandoned and marginalized...."¹¹⁵

A later work also touches on the possible limits of religious in political activity. For Ricardo Antoncich the question should remain open without strict and precise limits. He says: "This brings the question of the limits of action by religious. But one does not have to identify the boundaries of each vocation with the boundaries of the other members of the People of God."¹¹⁶

Christology

Before Puebla, in CLAR discussions Jesus was often portrayed as a prophetic figure who was in conflict against the political and religious institutions of His day. This image of Jesus, engaged in conflict, does not appear in the Puebla document.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless within CLAR this image of Jesus remains,¹¹⁸ although after 1984 it is given less emphasis. In its place Jesus is increasingly seen as the Suffering Servant, who bears injustice and oppression for the salvation of all. This Suffering Servant image is given a definite Latin American character within the CLAR discussions in two ways. First, the Suffering Servant is identified with the sufferings of the poor and oppressed in Latin America. Christ suffers along with the poor, allowing them to bring pardon and a more just social order to Latin America. Second, the Suffering Servant is a model for religious. In the face of opposition from government leaders and the upper classes, many religious suffer martyrdom. The Suffering Servant is a stark reminder that the mission of religious sometimes results in following Jesus to the cross and dying for justice.¹¹⁹

115 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso*, Colección CLAR 47 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1981): 88. It is interesting to see that the CLAR theologians use *Religious and Human Promotion* without mentioning that it strongly rejects any party political action by religious (RHP 12,1-3). Secretariado general de la CLAR ed., *Hacia una vida religiosa latinoamericana*, p. 518. The last mentioned lists *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso* as a work of the CLAR team of theologians.

116 R. Antoncich, "La vida religiosa frente a la deuda externa," in *El cristiano frente a la deuda externa*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie I, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 200.

117 J. Sobrino, "Reflexiones sobre el documento de cristología de Puebla," in *Puebla. Panorama de la teología latinoamericana V*, ed. SELADOC (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1981): 159-173. J. Van Nieuwenhove, *Church and Theology in Puebla*, p. 31-38.

118 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Fidelidad y conflicto*, p. 53-63. Conferencia de los Religiosos de Puerto Rico, "Presencia de los religiosos en la actual coyuntura política," p. 6. S. Galilea, *Espiritualidad de la evangelización*, p. 99-104.

119 Secretariado CLAR, "Síntesis de los informes 1 de las conferencias nacionales. Documento 9," in *VIII Asamblea General de la CLAR, Paraguay. Abril 1982*, vol. 2 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1982). M. Perdiá, "Memoria: XXV años de la CLAR [XX Junta Directiva, Fortaleza]," p. 18. Idem, "El resucitado es el crucificado. Esperanza para los crucificados de la historia," *Boletín CLAR* 22:8 (agosto 1984): 4-15. V. Moreira da Silva, "Por la redención latinoamericana: Seguir a Jesucristo en la Iglesia del continente," *Boletín CLAR* 22:7 (julio 1984): 14. C. Mesters, *La misión del pueblo que sufre*, 2nd ed. Colección Perspectivas (Petrópolis: Vozes; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1987). CLAR, "La vida religiosa en

10.5 Ecclesiology

Prior to Puebla, CLAR adopted an ecclesiological vision which saw the Church as composed of an institutional and a charismatic pole. Puebla seeks to tell the truth about the Church (220-303) but the result is not so clear. While the Final Document is seen as a composite of various ecclesiological perspectives, the stress is clearly placed upon the importance of the Church's hierarchical structure. There is no discussion in the Final Document of the Church as composed of charismatic and institutional poles.¹²⁰ Nonetheless after Puebla, CLAR's vision of the Church as having charismatic and institutional poles remains dominant, although new ecclesiological images emerge.¹²¹

Levels of Church

At the 1982 CLAR General Assembly an alternative way of viewing Church is proposed. With the theme of the Assembly 'communion', a question arises as to how religious can improve communion within the Latin American Church. As a way to help explain the various aspects of communion in the Church, the CLAR secretary general proposes an ecclesiology which stresses 'levels of Church'. According to this ecclesiological perspective, four separate levels in the Church are identified, each with a different focus of concern: the People of God, the hierarchy, pastoral work and plans, and the *CEBs*. Religious are seen as a free floating element which is involved in each of the four levels.

This view of the Church imposes a special responsibility upon religious. Since they are not bound within one level, they have an ongoing responsibility to seek communion with the entire Church.¹²²

América Latina a los veinte años del Concilio Vaticano II. Contribución de la CLAR al Sínodo Extraordinario convocado por el Santo Padre Juan Pablo II (Roma - 1985)," *Boletín CLAR* 24:2-3 (febrero-marzo 1986): 7. This is the CLAR report for the 1985 Synod of Bishops.

120 J. Van Nieuwenhove, *Church and Theology in Puebla*, p. 41-54. R. Muñoz, "Sobre el capítulo eclesiológico de las conclusiones de Puebla," in *Puebla. Panorama de la teología latinoamericana V*, ed. SELADOC (Salamanca: Sígueme, 1981): 230-241.

121 C. Palmés, "Informe de la presidencia y secretariado [VII Asamblea General, Santo Domingo]," p. 13-14. This view is defended by President Perdíá as two perspectives on how to view the Church: sacramental-institutional and sacramental-communal. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Tendencias actuales de la vida religiosa en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 29:1 (enero 1991): 17. This view of the Church is also apparent in the 1991 Work document for the CLAR General Assembly. Some of the many references to *LG 44c* as justifying a degree of independence from the hierarchy: C. Boff, "Formación en las comunidades insertas," *Boletín CLAR* 16:2-3 (febrero-marzo 1988): 5. C. Maccise, "La vida religiosa del futuro," *Boletín CLAR* 22:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1984): 7. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 100.

122 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Síntesis de los informes #1 [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 10-14. "Informes 2 y 3 de la conferencia," in *VIII Asamblea General de la CLAR, Paraguay. Abril 1982*, vol. 3 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1982). The Argentine Religious Conference is strongly opposed to this view of the Church. Conferencia de Religiosos de Colombia, "La vida religiosa en Colombia desde la opción por los pobres al servicio de

The presences of Jesus

Another ecclesiological vision appears in a text on religious formation. After briefly discussing the model of Church as the Body of Christ, there is a treatment of the Church as manifesting various presences of Jesus. From this ecclesiological perspective, the Church can be seen as containing the presence of Jesus in various ways. Jesus is present in the Eucharist, the ecclesial community with the hierarchy, and among the poor. These various presences of Jesus are brought together in the Church but two things are seen as necessary: unity and solidarity. Each Christian should recognize the unity of the Church and strive to further it in spite of differences. Yet a recognition of unity is not enough, for the Church also exists for others and mission in the world. Therefore, accompanying unity, there is also a need for solidarity between the Church and the poor.¹²³

This ecclesiology realizes that there may sometimes exist problems in balancing the various 'presences of Jesus'. One problem is a tendency to only see the presence of Jesus in one of the three areas, ignoring the other two. A greater and more pressing problem arises from tensions between the need for internal Church unity and solidarity with the poor. According to this study, this balance can be achieved through giving a priority to the solidarity to the poor: "It is said that one is unable to live intensely the presence of Jesus in community, in the hierarchy and the Eucharist, if not also living His presence among the poor."¹²⁴

The Church of the Poor

CLAR's focus on the construction of the Church of the Poor continues, yet after Puebla there is an important difference. The Church of the Poor is seen as flowing from results of Puebla. For CLAR, the acceptance by the Latin American bishops of the option for the poor requires the building of a Church of the Poor. In fact, the construction of this Church of the Poor is viewed as the tangible sign of whether the Church actually has converted to Puebla's option for the poor.¹²⁵

The Church of the Poor is not just a visible sign of the Church's actual conversion but a necessity in the Latin American context. Only through a Church of the Poor can a clear challenge be offered to the existing social order of Latin America. A Church of the Poor would provide a strong witness of alternative values which challenge the dominant ideology and offer the basis for a new society.¹²⁶

For CLAR, the Church of the Poor remains an important goal. In the General Plan for 1983-1985 the 'popular church' is linked with the option for the poor as one

la comunidad," *Boletín CLAR* 24:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1986): 22-24. While not common, this vision of the Church is also apparent at the 1986 annual conference of Columbian Religious Conference.

123 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 91-98.

124 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 95.

125 CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 10.

126 J.B. Libânio and F. Taborda, "Valores que queremos proyectar," *Boletín CLAR* 21:1-2 (enero-febrero 1983): 14-15.

of the goals for the three year period. While supporting the Church of the Poor, CLAR is also conscious that this support may be misunderstood and denies any desire to create an alternative church in competition to the bishops. Nonetheless, according to the General Plan, the construction of the Church of the Poor cannot be avoided since it is seen as a consequence of Puebla's option for the poor. It flows from a "pastoral action which we believe answers the impulses of Puebla."¹²⁷

Rival ecclesiologies

Finally, some Latin American religious see a clash between CLAR and the hierarchy as rooted in different ecclesiologies. While this clash was alluded to earlier, now it is clearly discussed. The problem between CLAR and CELAM is thus not seen in terms of the Church structure nor as a failure to balance different loyalties. Instead, in the wake of Vatican II, Medellín and Puebla, Latin American religious identify three rival ecclesiologies upon which bishops, as well as religious, base their theology and pastoral actions.

There is first of all a traditional ecclesiology which is held by those who refuse the changes of the Second Vatican Council. From this ecclesiological perspective, the focus is the individual and his/her need to hear the truth, grow in virtue, obediently accept Church teachings and receive the sacraments. The Church, being a deposit of the faith, is seen as having the responsibility to meet these needs.

A second ecclesiology accepts the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. With this acceptance comes an emphasis on the importance of the faith community and the presence of God in history. Along with this there is also a stress on the sacraments and on the Word, alive and active in the life of the community.

Finally, there is a liberation ecclesiology which stresses the role of the faith community in proclaiming the Word of God, denouncing injustice and actively supporting social change. For this ecclesiology, the focus is the Kingdom, both as a present reality in history as well as a utopia to which all praxis should be directed. The sacraments are viewed as opportunities for the strengthening of the people's resolve and the Bible becomes a mirror through which the contemporary socio-political and cultural reality is judged.¹²⁸

127 CLAR, "Plan Global 1983-1985," p. 8.

128 R. Muñoz, "Tres momentos en la conciencia eclesial," *Boletín CLAR* 19:8 (agosto 1981): 3-7. G. Iriarte and R. Antoncich, *La enseñanza social del Evangelio*, p. 67-72. M. Rocha, *La radicalidad de la vida religiosa*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 49 (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1977; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 39-41. Rocha mentions these three mentalities and stresses how they also affect the relationship between the Church and religious life with society.

11 Religious life and evangelization from insertion among the poor

11.0 Introduction

CLAR found in Puebla confirmation for its theology of religious life and support for its liberating evangelization. At key points Puebla was seen as accepting CLAR's views on the religious life in its discussion on: religious consecration, the evangelical counsels, and the poverty witness by religious. Reading Puebla as a continuation of Medellín's concerns and options, CLAR discovered support from the Latin American hierarchy for its view of the social reality and the necessity of a liberating evangelization.

CLAR innovatively received Puebla's concept of 'communion and participation'. Without rejecting its previous acceptance of dependency theory, CLAR shifted its view of the Latin American socio-political reality. This reality was seen as lacking in communion and participation and only adherence to the option for the poor could redress this situation.

Finally, within the discussions among Latin American religious, there were some issues in which Puebla was re-interpreted, sometimes revealing vast differences of opinion. For some religious, the Latin American Church's acceptance of the option for the poor implied a change of social location, conversion to the poor and the inevitability of conflicts from this choice. Differences existed over the evangelization of the political, ideologies, and the role of religious in partisan political activity. Jesus was viewed as a prophetic figure who was in constant conflict with the political and religious authorities of first century Palestine. However, this prophetic image of Jesus became less dominant in CLAR discussions, being replaced by the Suffering Servant. Ecclesiology was a final area where Puebla was re-interpreted. While maintaining its pre-Puebla view that the Church has charismatic and institutional poles, there emerged other ecclesiological images. Two of these alternative images were the 'levels of Church' and 'presences of Jesus' both of which highlighted the need by religious to balance commitments to the Church and the poor. Dedication to the Church of the Poor continued and was viewed as a necessary consequence of the Latin American Church's acceptance of the option for the poor. Lastly, within CLAR it became clear that three rival ecclesiological visions were in conflict within the Latin American Church.

Chapter 11 continues CLAR's reflections on religious life and evangelization. As previously said, CLAR's reflections on most issues remain unchanged after Puebla, therefore this chapter does not review what has been previously accepted. Instead,

Chapter 11 focuses on concerns which dominate the discussions within CLAR until 1989. During this ten year period, CLAR's reflections acquire a definite focus, the *comunidades insertas*, which are surrounded by tensions from both religious congregations and the hierarchy. CLAR devotes much attention to these tensions and the *comunidades insertas* become, in effect, the principal generator of theological questions and insights on the religious life and evangelization.

After Puebla one change is apparent which affects this study's analysis. Unlike before Puebla, it is no longer possible to clearly divide reflections which affect religious life from those which concern evangelization. CLAR recognizes the full impact of its linking religious consecration and mission and as a result religious life and community structures are seen as inseparable from evangelization and its needs.¹²⁹ As the CLAR theological team says:

"It is customary in official documents of the Church to make a distinction between what pertains to religious life '*ad intra*' (and this belongs to the institute) and that which affects the apostolate (and this would be the competency of the bishops).

"But this distinction proves to be inadequate, since the most important contribution to the apostolate is the specific mission of each institute, which as part of the charism, belongs to the nature of religious life and therefore leads each institute to interpret its charism in response to new apostolic situations."¹³⁰

Joined to this is another reason why any separation between religious identity and evangelization cannot be maintained. With its support for the *comunidades insertas*, CLAR identifies a concrete form of religious community in which internal life and religious identity is inseparable from evangelization. Through the praxis of religious in the *comunidades insertas*, they are forced to re-interpret their community life and identity in order to faithfully evangelize from the option for the poor.¹³¹

For this reason Chapter 11 analyzes the principal themes which touch on both religious life and evangelization. While a separation between topics is made, this is done for the clarity of the analysis. Within CLAR, issues of internal religious life

129 C. Palmés, "Informe de la presidencia y secretariado [VII Asamblea General, Santo Domingo]," p. 8. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 128-129.

130 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Fidelidad y conflicto*, p. 25-26; ("Se suele hacer en los documentos oficiales de la Iglesia una distinción entre lo que pertenece a la vida religiosa '*ad intra*' [y esto pertenecería al Instituto] y lo que toca al apostolado [y esto sería competencia de los obispos]. Pero esta distinción resulta inadecuada, pues la más importante contribución de cada Instituto, lo cual – como parte del carisma – pertenece a la naturaleza misma de la vida religiosa y por tanto, toca a cada Instituto interpretar su carisma en la respuesta apostólica a las nuevas situaciones").

131 C. Bazarra, *El riesgo del Espíritu*, p. 49. A. Moser, *Integración afectiva y compromiso social en América Latina*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización Serie II, vol. 7 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 43-48.

and its external witness through evangelization are viewed as two sides of the same coin.

11.1 Comunidades insertas

Prior to Puebla, CLAR praised the *comunidades insertas* and saw them as a possible new form of religious life which could meet the internal community needs of religious as well as the external challenges of evangelization.¹³² This praise turns into full official support after the 1985 General Assembly (Guatemala).

There are several reasons why CLAR supports the *comunidades insertas*. The *comunidades insertas* are viewed as a form of religious life which can bring communion between religious and the poor. Through life and action for the poor's liberation, religious are able to re-establish a link between religious life and the poor.¹³³ This link is necessary not only to further evangelization but also for religious life identity. Through life in the *comunidades insertas* religious can re-discover aspects of their life and congregational charisms which had been lost or overlooked.¹³⁴

Life in insertion is also a radical form of fidelity to the option for the poor. Through insertion and praxis among the poor, religious adopt the same preferential option which Jesus accepted. They can, like Jesus, mold their life and praxis to the liberation of the poor from oppression. Furthermore, the acceptance of the option for the poor is a form of obedience to the Latin American Church, which adopted the option at Puebla and even praised religious who live among the poor (733).¹³⁵

From the social location of the poor, religious further have a clearer vision of the socio-political reality of Latin America. Living among the poor religious discover "the oppressive idols of the capitalist system and their contrary implications for the Kingdom and the life of the poor."¹³⁶

Finally, from the *comunidades insertas*, religious have a new experience of God. Amid the daily misery and oppression, religious discover a God who is with the poor. From this experience, religious fashion a spirituality of insertion which allows religious to overcome past spiritualities of religious life which are dualistic and flow from different cultural-historical contexts.¹³⁷

Formation in comunidades insertas

The 1985 CLAR General Assembly also supports the *comunidades insertas* as a location for the initial formation of religious. In response to increased vocations

132 Cf. p. 117-118.

133 "XX Junta Directiva de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 22:4-5 (abril-mayo 1984): 5.

134 CLAR, "Camino de comunión-inserción [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 4.

135 CLAR, "Camino de comunión-inserción [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 4-7.

136 CLAR, "La vida religiosa... a los veinte años del Concilio," p. 8; ("Los ídolos opresores del sistema capitalista y sus opuestas al Reino y a la vida del pobre").

137 CLAR, "Camino de comunión-inserción [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 7-8.

to religious life, CLAR seeks a way to incorporate its theological insights on religious life and evangelization into formation. The *comunidades insertas* are, therefore, viewed as a perfect location for the initial formation of religious. Among the poor in the *comunidades insertas*, young religious can not only be taught a modern theology of religious life but also learn the importance of the poor for religious.¹³⁸

Formation in *comunidades insertas* is further judged necessary for young religious in order to retain connection with their own cultures. Based upon a 1986 survey, CLAR discovers that a high percentage of new vocations to the religious life come from the poorer classes.¹³⁹ Within CLAR, there is a clear desire to fashion a formation program which does not alienate these young religious from their native cultures. The *comunidades insertas* are thus seen as a concrete means to this goal. In the *comunidades insertas*, young religious can retain connection to their culture while receiving formation.¹⁴⁰

The *comunidades insertas* are a location for religious formation which breaks with the past in several ways. As the candidates for religious life live among the poor, they discover a way of fidelity to the option for the poor which links religious life to the poor in a dialectical manner. In so doing, religious learn that they must actively inculturate themselves into the life and culture of the poor. Education by young religious in the *comunidades insertas* is in relation not to future ministry but the present evangelization among the poor and support for their liberation. For this reason, the social sciences acquire a prime importance, for some replacing the role which philosophy formerly enjoyed in religious formation. Finally, the agent of formation is no longer seen as only the novice director but includes the poor who also observe and guide the young religious in his/her life.¹⁴¹

Formation of religious from the *comunidades insertas* is a key concern within CLAR's discussions and is the central theme for the 1988 General Assembly.¹⁴² At that General Assembly, it is said that "The whole work [of the Assembly-jk]

138 CLAR, "Camino de comunión-inserción [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 8-9.

139 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La vida religiosa. Una opción para los jóvenes*, p. 7-8, 77-78. According to this study, 52.79% of the novices come from poor or campesino backgrounds.

140 CLAR, "Camino de comunión-inserción [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 8-9.

141 C. Boff, "Formación en las comunidades insertas," p. 3-18. R. Shoonstein and V. López, "Hacia un nuevo estilo de formación desde los pobres," *Boletín CLAR* 16:2-3 (febrero-marzo 1988): 20-32. A. Morales, "Teología de la liberación y formación franciscana," p. 9-10, 14-15. Morales thinks that the social sciences will gain the same importance in religious formation that philosophy formerly enjoyed. C. Boff, M.C. de Freitas and C. Palacio, *Formación para la vida religiosa hoy*. This reprint of a 1982 CRB work advocates the *comunidades insertas* as a place of permanent formation of religious.

142 L. de Diego, "Apuntes de una experiencia de formación," *Boletín CLAR* 26:1 (enero 1988): 3-19.

took the *formation in insertion* as an 'Experience-Sign', inspiring all the formation of religious life".¹⁴³

11.2 Social class and religious life identity

Before Puebla there was a realization that the authenticity of religious life had been compromised through a centuries long alliance with the ruling classes in Latin America.¹⁴⁴ The recovery of this authenticity required a rupture with that alliance and a turning towards the poor. Through contact with the poor, it was thought that religious could rediscover certain forgotten values and realize how they had accepted the values of the dominant class.

After Puebla, there are within CLAR's discussions two interesting additions to the relationship between religious life identity and social class. While neither is an official CLAR position, they represent perspectives which reveal what may have been broader concerns.

CLAR republishes a 1977 CRB book by the Dominican Mateus Rocha, who states that he has no intention to present a consensus view of religious life.¹⁴⁵ Instead, Rocha offers a radical vision of the religious life and its need for change in the context of Latin America.¹⁴⁶ What is striking about the book is his discussion of social class and religious life identity.

For Rocha, religious life identity must not be viewed as only having theological and psychological dimensions. Added to these, there is also a sociological dimension, because religious life identity is joined to a specific social class, molded by a relationship between religious and the upper classes. This relationship is evident in the fact that most of the evangelization structures by religious serve the upper classes. Rocha also sees this relationship in the lifestyle and mentality of religious. Through contact with the upper classes, religious life in Latin America has internalized an upper class way of life and vision of the world.

With this understanding of an alliance of religious and the upper classes, Rocha sees the 'crisis of identity' in religious life as a blessing. He says that while there is much questioning of the identity of religious life, its relation to social class needs consideration. In the Latin American context, Rocha acknowledges that some fear religious are losing their identity but he asks, "Why save an identity of the petty bourgeois?"¹⁴⁷ For Rocha, the loss of this religious identity, bound up

143 CLAR, "Formación para la Nueva Evangelización (síntesis del aporte de la asamblea para un documento)," *Boletín CLAR* 26:7-8 (julio-agosto 1988): 22; ("El trabajo conjunto tomó la *Formation en la inserción* como 'Experiencia-Signo' inspiradora para la totalidad de la formación de la vida religiosa"). G. Iriarte, "Formación," *Boletín CLAR* 26:10 (octubre 1988): 4-10. Iriarte is elected CLAR vice president at the 1988 CLAR General Assembly.

144 Cf. p. 101-105.

145 M. Rocha, *La radicalidad de la vida religiosa*.

146 M. Rocha, *La radicalidad de la vida religiosa*, p. 12.

147 M. Rocha, *La radicalidad de la vida religiosa*, p. 92.

with the upper classes, is a necessity if religious are to witness the Gospel and serve the poor.¹⁴⁸

A second contribution also stresses the fact that religious life has a sociological dimension to its identity. At a CLAR organized seminar for religious educators from throughout Latin America, Hugo Paiva discusses religious identity. He states that the identity of religious life has both theological and sociological aspects. The theological aspect of religious life roots itself in relation to the Gospel message and Christ. Its sociological aspect flows from the fact that religious life is not merely a collection of individuals but a social institution. Additionally, religious make a sociological claim that their life is a sign of God to others. This requires that the people within a particular society understand religious as offering such a witness through their life and actions. According to Paiva, for these reasons religious identity should be then considered not only from a theological but also sociological perspective.

For Paiva, the importance of this sociological perspective is often ignored. This he finds unfortunate because it can be a valuable check to determine if religious in a specific social context are, in fact, living in accordance with their theological vision.

Through sociology, religious can concretely learn how their public witness is understood by the people. Sociology also allows religious to analyze the functioning of their pastoral institutions (esp. schools) in order to see who in fact are served by these. Through sociological analysis of their public witness and work, religious can see how their identity has been deformed. It can also reveal the ways in which religious must change in order to more completely express their theological vision and offer a clear witness of God.

Thus Paiva agrees with Rocha that religious life identity has a sociological dimension. However, unlike Rocha, Paiva advocates the use of sociological analysis for critically analyzing religious life. Through such analysis, it can be seen how religious life is perceived by others and who, in fact, religious serve through their pastoral institutions.¹⁴⁹

11.3 The charism of the founders

A proper understanding of the charism of the founders and its interpretation in the context of Latin America becomes a prime concern. Through their life and witness the *comunidades insertas* choose another way to live their congregations founding charisms, re-interpreting them in the light of Latin America's socio-political and cultural context. However, this re-interpretation encounters much resistance from the leadership of religious congregations.

148 M. Rocha, *La radicalidad de la vida religiosa*, p. 92, 96-98.

149 H. Paiva, "Búsqueda de nuestra propia identidad religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 21:8-9 (agosto-septiembre 1983): 26-30, esp. 27-28.

CLAR's treatment of the charism of the founders should be seen in continuity with its earlier reflections.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, after Puebla, CLAR's central concern is hermeneutical, how to properly (re)interpret a congregation's founding charism in the context of Latin America.

General understanding of charism of the founders

Before Puebla, the charism of the founders was viewed as a response by a founder/ess to the Spirit's call in order to meet some unaddressed social/ecclesial need of a specific historical period. Over the course of time others join the founder/ess, leading to the establishment of a congregation which transmits and further develops the founder/ess' way of life and experience of the Spirit. Also present in the pre-Puebla period was an interpretation that the Second Vatican Council had shifted the Church's focus from the individual congregational charisms to the common charism of religious life.¹⁵¹ Finally, it was believed that the Council taught that this common charism of religious life cannot be seen in isolation. Instead, it is a part of the People of God where every baptized Christian has charisms for the good of the Church and the construction of the Kingdom.¹⁵²

These understandings of the charism of the founders remain after Puebla. They are, nonetheless, given with a slightly different focus. The founders and foundresses of most religious congregations are seen as being called by the Spirit to serve the poor. The final document of the 1982 CLAR General Assembly states:

"the experience of our Founders to whom the call of God led them to catch the challenges of their time to serve the most poor and needy."¹⁵³

This viewpoint is shared by others and becomes accepted a common reference point; namely that the founder/esses of most religious had from the beginning a clear link with the poor and that their experience of the Spirit led them to serve the poor.¹⁵⁴

11.3.1 Interpretation of the charism of the founders

Concern for the interpretation of the charism of the founders dominates the discussion around the theme. As before Puebla, interpretation of the congregational charism is seen as obscured by several factors. An initial obstacle arises from the normal institutionalization of the founder's charism. This institutionalization, while necessary for the preservation of a charism, simultaneously dilutes its

150 Cf. p. 115-116.

151 C. Maccise, "La vida religiosa del futuro," p. 4-8. Idem, "La creatividad en la vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 20:8 (agosto 1982): 7-8.

152 Cf. p. 78-79. Equipo de pastoral de la salud, *Seguimiento de Jesús junto al enfermo*, p. 33-34. CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 11, 14. C. Maccise, "Cristo en los hermanos," *Boletín CLAR* 23:10-11 (octubre-noviembre 1985): 17.

153 CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 11.

154 CLAR, "Comunión e inserción. Comunicado [XX Junta Directiva, Fortaleza]," p. 24.

original force and power.¹⁵⁵ The interpretation of a congregational charism is also complicated by the fact that most religious congregations in Latin America were founded in Europe. Along with transmitting the founder/ess' spirituality, these congregations have also communicated values and forms of life which are alien to Latin America. Finally, past interpretations of foundational charisms are viewed with suspicion because they had been formed or influenced by the dominant social classes in Latin America.¹⁵⁶

So, for religious, the task is how to interpret their founding charism in order to overcome the inertia from institutionalization, to separate the essential from historical-cultural forms, and to correct ideological misinterpretations. In order to accomplish this, there are a variety of hermeneutical approaches apparent in CLAR discussions.

Historical re-reading of the founder/ess' life

A first hermeneutical approach to the interpretation of the founder's charism relies on the early history of the congregation. Through an examination of the founder/ess' life this approach seeks to identify values which can guide religious in Latin America.

Relying on the life of a founder/ess, this approach makes three presumptions which affect its reading of the past. First, there is a clear presumption that the historical gulf between the past and present cannot be bridged by imitation. Latin American religious, living in a radically different historical era, are unable to merely imitate the actions and life of the founder/ess. Instead, history should be read in a way which enables religious to incarnate in their life and praxis the values which guided their congregation's founder/ess. Second, this approach makes a presumption in favor of a congregation's early history. It is the life of the founder/ess rather than in later historical reflections by a congregation on a founder/ess which are judged as revealing these values. Finally, any reading of a founder/ess' life should begin with the questions and issues that arise from the Latin American reality.

There are several examples of this historical re-reading of a founder/ess' life in CLAR discussions. Starting with current challenges that Latin American religious face (e.g. inculturation, the oppression of the poor, evangelization), the lives of the founder/esses are examined to see how they responded to these concerns in their own time. From this examination, religious discover values which guided their founder/ess in meeting these challenges. This re-reading of the founder's life is viewed as a concrete way to keep the charism alive and responsive. Of further importance is that this re-reading does not seek a definitive answer for the challenges facing Latin American religious. Instead, the goal is the discovery of values

155 V.L. Herrero, "Paraguay asamblea nacional 1981," p. 9. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso*, p. 40, 46.

156 C. Maccise, "La creatividad en la vida religiosa," p. 8-9.

which can assist religious in the incarnation of their founding charism in Latin America.¹⁵⁷

Hermeneutical circle as interpretative tool

A second approach appears only once in CLAR discussions and also looks at the history of the founder but not merely to discover values which guided his/her life. Instead, this approach searches for the founder/ess' own unique hermeneutical vision of the socio-political reality. This approach strives to identify this hermeneutical vision to guide a congregation's incarnation of its charism in Latin America.

In a discussion on Franciscan formation, Alonso Morales gives an example of this approach. For Morales, Francis of Assisi had a unique way of viewing the social reality around him, and this vision guided his lifestyle and actions. While not detailing this hermeneutical vision, Morales states that it was fashioned around a disavowal of power (disappropriation) and a willingness to accept the role of a servant (minority).

Yet for Morales, after discovering the elements of this hermeneutical vision, another step is necessary. In order to clearly discern how this hermeneutic of Francis can be incarnated into Latin American reality it must be integrated in a hermeneutical circle. Within this hermeneutical circle, the Gospel and the 'hermeneutic' of Francis are read in relation to solidarity with the poor. In this way the hermeneutic of Francis is related to the Gospel as well as the current socio-political reality.¹⁵⁸

The option for the poor

Within CLAR, the principal hermeneutical approach for the interpretation of the founder's charism is the use of the option for the poor. Through this approach the charism of the founders is interpreted through fidelity to the option for the poor which leads religious to a praxis of support for the poor's liberation and the adoption of their perspective on reality. But this praxis by religious raises questions which challenge the accepted interpretation of their congregation's charism. Similarly, adopting the perspective of the poor allows religious to see the life of the founder/ess in a way which highlights aspects previously viewed as unimportant. As a consequence of the option for the poor, religious pose new questions and also re-discover previously unnoticed aspects of their congregational charism.

157 J. Sobrino, "El mayor servicio de la Compañía de Jesús," *Boletín CLAR* 20:6-7 (junio-julio 1982): 7-23. C. Maccise, "Teresa de Jesús. Experiencia de Dios y realismo humano," *Boletín CLAR* 20:11 (noviembre 1982): 3-15. G. Martigni, "Un reformador al servicio de los enfermos," *Boletín CLAR* 20:9 (septiembre 1982): 4-7, 10-13; (about St. Camilo de Leles). O. Mattos, *Valores. Magdalena Sofía Barat*, Colección Perspectivas 15 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1984). M.C. Amarante Rondón, *Un perfil tallado en la esperanza. Rosa Filipina Duchesne*. R. Valdeavellano and D. Aleixandre, *Una santa de contrastes para tiempos conflictivos. Rosa Filipina Duchesne*.

158 A. Morales, "Teología de la liberación y formación franciscana," p. 15.

There are several justifications which are given for the use of the option as a hermeneutical key for a founder's charism. First of all the option for the poor is seen as a means by which religious can join themselves to the original inspiration of a congregation's founder/ess. This original inspiration is viewed not just a spiritual or mental attitude but also a social relationship because the founder/esses established a specific relationship with the poor.

J.B. Libânio elaborates on the connection between the option for the poor and a congregation's 'original inspiration'. For Libânio, every founder/ess had an experience of God which is given different shapes and understandings because of the various cultural and historical eras. This experience of God always leads the founder/ess to the poor because the Christian God has a preference for the poor. Thus in Libânio's opinion the founder/esses had throughout history made an option for the poor though in ways which are historically variable.

Yet for Libânio, this initial experience of God by a founder is always perceived, and given a concrete expression by a founder/ess' early followers. In the light of their contact with the founder/ess and the historical era, a specific way of life is structured for those who seek to share in the initial experience of the founder. Through this structuring, the charism of the founder is transmitted from one generation to the next.

According to Libânio, this transmission proceeds smoothly so long as the culture and historical conditions which gave birth to the charism remain unchanged. However, when a congregation enters into another culture or passes through a period of radical social change, the transmission of the charism breaks down. Instead of transmitting the charism with its link to the poor, religious congregations hand down only an antiquated historical form, alien to religious as well as their historical reality.

When such a breakdown occurs, conflict arises as some religious equate fidelity to the founder's charism with strict observance of traditional ways of life. In this situation a crisis develops over the proper interpretation of the congregation's charism. For Libânio, this is the situation of Latin American religious life where conflict emerges over whether the historical expressions of a founder's charism are essential.

Libânio says that in order to overcome this crisis, the option for the poor is necessary. The option for the poor is not a novelty, but rather points to a common duty of all Christians, including religious. The use of the option for the poor allows religious to see if they are fulfilling this common duty and rediscover the link which the founders had between religious life and the poor.¹⁵⁹

The use of option for the poor as a hermeneutic for the interpretation of a founder/ess' charism is also seen as necessary for the renewal of religious congre-

159 J.B. Libânio, "Discernimiento vocacional. La experiencia 'fundante'," p. 3-14. Idem, "Un modelo concreto en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 25:4 (abril 1987): 3-15.

gations. According to this line of reasoning, the charisms of religious congregations are born and nurtured in a definite social location, namely among the poor.¹⁶⁰ When a religious congregation changes its social location, a process of accommodation and decay begins. Thus for the interpretation of the charism and its renewal in a concrete historical situation a return is necessary to its social location of birth. Only through this change of location can religious learn the inadequacy of their current interpretations of the founder/ess' charism.¹⁶¹

Within CLAR the use of the option for the poor as a hermeneutic for the interpretation of the foundational charisms is widespread.¹⁶² The power in this approach lies in its concreteness. From a definite social location, as well as a concrete form of religious community (*comunidades insertas*), a new interpretation of the founding charisms is seen to arise. Thus at the CLAR 1984 General Board Meeting, as well as the 1985 Ninth General Assembly, the *comunidades insertas* are viewed as a radical expression of the option for the poor and the place where an interpretation of congregations' founding charisms can emerge.¹⁶³

11.3.2 The relation of the charism of the founders and pastoral works

An additional issue is the relationship between the charism of the founders and specific pastoral works.¹⁶⁴ The 1981 CLAR Eighteenth General Board Meeting briefly addresses this question and states that a founding charism cannot be seen as limiting religious to one form of pastoral work. The Board says, "It is no answer when the charism is identified (and this can be verified) with concrete works."¹⁶⁵ Instead, for the General Board the option for the poor is the standard which can link religious pastoral works with the founding charism.¹⁶⁶

160 Cf. p. 115.

161 CRB, "El religiosa-profeta," *Boletín CLAR* 25:8 (agosto 1987): 18. V. Codina, "Raíces de la espiritualidad del compromiso con los pobres," in *Espiritualidad del compromiso con los pobres*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie III, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 105-108.

162 "Centroamérica a la luz de la fe y desde la experiencia," *Boletín CLAR* 18:9 (septiembre 1980): 12. V. Moreira da Silva, "Por la redención latinoamericana," p. 13. Conferencia de Religiosos de Colombia, "Opciones de una asamblea," *Boletín CLAR* 19:7 (julio 1981): 7. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación. Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 143. CLAR, "La vida religiosa...a los veinte años del Concilio," p. 4.

163 CLAR, "Comunidad e inserción. Comunicado [XX Junta Directiva, Fortaleza]," p. 22-25. Idem, "Camino de comunión-inserción [IX Asamblea General, Guatemala]," p. 4. M. Perdiá, "Informe de presidencia [XIX Junta Directiva, Puerto Rico]," p. 8.

164 Cf. p. 134.

165 CLAR, "La vida religiosa: Una respuesta [XVIII Junta Directiva, Quito]," *Boletín CLAR* 14:3 (marzo 1981): 11; ("No es respuesta cuando se identifica - no es raro comprobarlo - carisma con obras concretas").

166 CLAR, "La vida religiosa: Una respuesta [XVIII Junta Directiva, Quito]," p. 11. C. Palacio, "Formación para la vida religiosa," in *Formación para la vida religiosa hoy*, 2nd ed., Colección CLAR 54 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1987): 144.

A different approach acknowledges a connection between the founder/ess' charism and specific pastoral works. Yet interestingly, the conclusion agrees with the CLAR General Board, namely it is the option for the poor which should be used in determining the pastoral works of religious. In a 1986 book on formation, the founding charism of a congregation is seen as always linked to evangelization in the form of specific pastoral works. But these pastoral works, while linked to a founder/ess' charism, are understood as historical responses from the time of the congregation's foundation. Yet, according to the CLAR theologians, a congregation's pastoral work cannot be separated from the duty by religious to share in the Church's mission as well as accepting new calls and priorities in evangelization. Therefore, religious congregations are advised to evaluate their pastoral works in the light of the universal Church and Puebla which called for an option for the poor. Rather than the past, religious should realize that the expression of their charisms in pastoral works should make the poor an "obligatory reference point in the discernment of an institute's specific mission".¹⁶⁷

11.4 Spirituality of insertion

The *comunidades insertas* are further seen as where a new spirituality is emerging which can benefit all religious. Through their praxis and contact with the poor's spirituality, inserted religious experience God in a different way and gain new insights about religious life.¹⁶⁸ It is these insights which CLAR, especially through its CRIMPO project, seeks to harness and systematize into a spirituality of insertion. There are three characteristics which mark CLAR's efforts to formulate a spirituality of insertion. First, it is a communal project flowing not from the spiritual experience of one founder/ess but rather from the common experience of religious from many different congregations, who live and work among the poor. Second, the religiosity of the poor is viewed as an important resource for this spirituality. Finally, the work in systematizing a spirituality of insertion is seen as an ongoing process. This is because the spirituality of insertion sees itself in need of constant revision in order to respond to an ever-changing history and different socio-political and cultural contexts. Therefore, there can never be a fixed and permanent spirituality of insertion, only general lines which are subject to revision.¹⁶⁹

Within the discussions of CLAR, several general lines of a spirituality of insertion can be identified.

167 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 100.

168 M. Perdíá, "Informe de presidencia y secretariado [XVIII Junta Directiva, Quito]," p. 6. Conferencia de Religiosos de Colombia, "Opciones de una asamblea," p. 12-13.

169 S. Ramírez, "De como viven según el Espíritu," in *Espiritualidad del compromiso con los pobres*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie III, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 27-28. V. Codina, "Raíces de la espiritualidad," p. 107-108.

Trinitarian

A spirituality of insertion is viewed as Trinitarian with a clear stress on the role of each person in the Trinity.

God the Creator is viewed as fashioning a world for humanity with the goal that everyone would live as 'children of God' and 'brothers/sisters to each other'. The world was created for the benefit of all and able to be transformed through the creative labor of men and women. With the entrance of sin into human history, this possibility of fulfilling God's plan disappears and is replaced with greed, avarice and oppression. The rich dominate the poor and deprive them even of the material goods which are necessary for life. This domination produces more sin, hatred and division as possessions become a symbol not of communion but division among people.

Jesus' Incarnation reveals to humanity a path for the restoration of God's original plan. Jesus demonstrated the brotherhood of all people through His birth in poverty and preaching to the poor. Through word and action Jesus told the poor of their dignity as 'children of God'. Jesus further reveals to all that God has a preference for the poor because they suffer injustice and oppression. It is this preference, the option for the poor, which can restore a shattered humanity to communion with each other and with God.

The life of Jesus further shows that humanity is created for a life in freedom. For this reason, Jesus refused to become enslaved to any human customs and institutions which could block His mission. On the contrary, He continually challenged social, religious and political institutions which restricted the freedom of people to become 'children of God' and 'brother/sisters to each other'.

The life of Jesus is viewed as a concrete example for inserted religious in several ways. First, Jesus' choice to incarnate Self among the poor is viewed as a model of how religious must live (in poverty) and where (among the poor). Through a life of poverty among the poor, religious encounter the poor Jesus, who lives and suffers daily among the oppressed. Second, through fidelity to the option for the poor, inserted religious unite their lives and praxis with Jesus, continuing His work in history. Thus union with Jesus is seen neither in an individualistic manner nor as separate from the historical context. Instead it is through the adoption of a historically relevant praxis for liberation that religious bind themselves to Jesus and His work of salvation. Third, martyrdom and a Resurrection hope guide the life of religious. Following Jesus leads religious to discover that His preaching/praxis led to the Cross. In a similar manner, religious can see the possibility that their commitment to the poor's liberation can result in persecution and death. But this realization is not a cause for despair, because the Crucified was also the Resurrected One. Religious gather hope that their life, fidelity and, in some cases, death will not be in vain but can lead to a resurrection; a world in which the poor are no longer oppressed.

The Holy Spirit is the dynamic renewer who keeps the Church faithful to its mission in human history. It is the Spirit who guides the Church throughout

history allowing it to witness in word and deed the hope of the Kingdom, God's original plan for humanity. But the Church undergoes periods of decay and corruption during which the Spirit inspires men and women to begin reform movements to counter abuses. Though these movements often encounter fierce opposition, through the Spirit's workings they often lead to a renewal in the Church.

The action of the Spirit is not restricted to past history but is active in the present as well. In Latin America the Spirit is visible in the *CEBs*, from which new ministries and services are surging, and in the *comunidades insertas*, whose life and praxis are challenging all religious.¹⁷⁰

Restoration of humanity

A spirituality of insertion sees that humanity has become enslaved in various ways and is therefore less human than God desires. In order to restore humanity, a liberation is necessary which can free people for communion with one another and God.

Humanity is enslaved first of all by idolatry which can take various forms. For some a false non-biblical image of God is preached which becomes an idol. This god is presented as one who legitimatizes and preserves the *status quo* and expects obedience for all people on laws. Through this idolatrous image of God people are deprived of the knowledge that they are all 'children of God' and 'brothers/sisters to each other'. Idolatry can also take the form of placing possessions above God. In this way money becomes a god which controls a person's life and dominates his/her view of self, others and the world. This leads people to a mistaken notion about their humanity, which neither accepts the limitations of human existence nor expresses gratitude to God for material possessions.

Humanity is also enslaved by social structures which limit human freedom. Through social sin in social structures, people learn to accept a dominant ideology which preserves the *status quo*. This dominant ideology influences how a person views self, reality and others.

From idolatry and enslavements to the dominant ideologies, humanity is in need of liberation for a recovery of freedom. This freedom is not, however, a mere absence of repression but directed to a positive goal; freedom is for rebuilding communion with God and others.¹⁷¹

Historicity of religious life/praxis

A spirituality of insertion accepts the transitory nature of religious life and praxis. Reviewing the history of religious life, a variety of forms of religious life appear not as chance occurrences but rather a sign of how religious have incarnated their following of Jesus in different historical periods. In the light of this history, the

170 C. Bazarra, *El riesgo del Espíritu*, p. 19-42. S. Ramírez, "De como vivir según el Espíritu," p. 30-31.

171 C. Bazarra, *El riesgo del Espíritu*, p. 32-33, 78-82, 88-89, 96-97. S. Ramírez, "De como vivir según el Espíritu," p. 37.

spirituality of insertion stresses that religious life is in a process of incarnating itself. As history progresses, so religious life modifies its life and praxis in order to remain a living witness of the Kingdom. Thus a spirituality of insertion does not look for unchangeable or core elements of religious life, but relevant forms and praxis in relation to history era and socio-political cultural contexts.¹⁷²

Poor as mediators for religious life

The spirituality of insertion sees the poor as an important mediator for religious life. It is the poor, as a social class, who are viewed as the focal point around which religious need to orient their life and praxis. They are a means by which religious life can discover God, social reality, the Kingdom's presence and essential aspects of religious life.

The poor allow religious to discover God. Through their life in poor areas, religious experience God not as a protector of the *status quo* but One who is present and alive among the poor in their misery and suffering. This is the biblical God who appears to religious through mediation of the poor.

The poor permit religious to obtain a clear vision of the social reality. Life among the poor allows religious to see another side of the Latin American socio-political and cultural reality. Among the poor, religious encounter the pain, suffering and oppression which is a daily part of the poor's life. This leads religious to see the oppression which is part of the Latin American reality, even though masked by the dominant ideology. From the social location of the poor, religious can pierce through this ideology and see the social reality in all its painful truth.

The poor allow the religious to discover concrete examples of the Kingdom in history. In the organizations of the poor and the *CEBS*, religious see movements which are slowly forming new social relationships of dignity and equality. In these the Kingdom can be seen as partially present, encouraging people to build communion among themselves even in the face of oppression.

Finally, the poor permit a rediscovery of essential values for religious life. Living among poor, religious learn the value of a poor lifestyle, hospitality, openness and trust in God. They come to see that fidelity to the option for the poor is a value which transcends efficiency as a criterion for evangelization.¹⁷³

Eschatological focus

For the spirituality of insertion religious life has a personal and communal life focus, which imposes upon religious a dual responsibility. First of all, religious have to witness the coming fullness of the Kingdom in human history. This demands

172 C. Bazarra, *El riesgo del Espíritu*, p. 52-55. S. Ramírez, "De como vivir según el Espíritu," p. 28.

173 C. Bazarra, *El riesgo del Espíritu*, p. 39. S. Ramírez, "Raíces de su vivir espiritual," in *Espiritualidad del compromiso con los pobres*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie III, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 50-62. V. Codina, "Raíces de la espiritualidad," p. 101-102. CLAR, "Formación para la Nueva Evangelización," p. 21-24, 26-27. CRB, "El religioso-profeta," p. 21.

that religious be perceived by others as giving such a witness and especially that the poor see in religious clear signs of the Kingdom. Accompanying this is a responsibility that religious are active agents of the Kingdom's construction in history. For Latin America, this leads religious to support for the poor's liberation. This support for the Kingdom is always related to the specific context. No *a priori* limits can thus be set to the evangelizing activity of religious. Instead, religious need to discover these limitations in relation to concrete historical and cultural contexts.¹⁷⁴

Shift from a eucharistic to a biblical focus

A spirituality of insertion makes an important break with other contemporary forms of religious life. While most religious communities view the Eucharist as the spiritual center of their religious life, for *comunidades insertas* this shifts to the Bible. With this shift there is neither a denial of the Eucharist's importance nor its value. Instead the *comunidades insertas* represent an attempt to re-root religious life in the Bible. There is no desire to selectively use biblical texts to legitimate religious life's right to exist, but instead the *comunidades insertas* view the Bible as a living story in which the community must root its life and praxis. For the spirituality of insertion, the Bible is read without the use of modern historical critical tools. In fact, there is for some a definite rejection of these forms of biblical analysis as a means to reveal the Bible's truth. Instead, religious read the Bible from the perspective of the poor and discover a God who challenges religious to change their life and praxis.

The Bible also helps religious in another way. It offers a mirror against which religious can judge the socio-political and cultural reality. Looking in the Bible's stories, religious discover, again alongside the poor, analogies with their own current social reality. The Exile, the years of Egyptian slavery, and the Exodus are viewed not as ancient history but pictures of current Latin American reality, which God has judged as sinful and in need of liberation.¹⁷⁵

Asceticism of daily life

A spirituality of insertion recognizes the importance of asceticism in religious life. Yet this asceticism is neither individualistic nor divorced from the socio-political reality but is coupled to the need for liberation of the poor. Religious practice this

174 S. Ramírez, "Como vivir según el Espíritu," p. 27-30. A. Moser, *Integración afectiva y compromiso social*, p. 79-82.

175 C. Bazarra, *El riesgo del Espíritu*, p. 74-75. S. Ramírez, "De como viven según el Espíritu," p. 40-41. Idem, "Raíces de su vivir espiritual," p. 75. C. Mesters, *Defenseless Flower: A New Reading of the Bible* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, Colección Perspectivas 16; repr. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989). Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 64-65. The CLAR theological team states that there are two ways to read the Bible: from the perspective of the rich or the poor. Another indication of the importance which the Bible acquires can be seen in the *Palabra-Vida* project. E. Tamez, "La Biblia desde la perspectiva de la mujer," *Retos*, no. 5 (marzo 1988): 29-39. Tamez pleads for a feminist reading of the Bible, which she says would complement the poor's perspective.

asceticism through a radical solidarity with the poor. Living among the poor, religious accept as a normal part of their life the hardships and sufferings which accompany life in the favelas and barrios. This is viewed as a practical example of asceticism which rebuilds communion among people through a solidarity that is more than rhetoric and demands that religious bear the physical deprivations and uncertain life among the poor.¹⁷⁶

Conflict

A spirituality of insertion stresses that conflict is a part of human reality. The following of Jesus and fidelity to the option for the poor does not lead to peace and tranquility but the opposite. Religious who opt for the poor and join in the struggle for liberation soon encounter opposition from a variety of sources (including their own self doubts) which are not easily resolved. Conflict is, therefore, seen as a natural consequence of the decision to radically follow Jesus and should not be avoided. Nor should religious trivialize conflicts or naively think that they can soon be resolved. On the contrary, some conflicts can last many years and may never be resolved. In this situation, the religious should not allow conflicts to turn him/her from fidelity to the option for the poor. Instead, patience is necessary in the midst of conflict while maintaining fidelity to the option for the poor.

The spirituality of insertion also sees the presence of God in the midst of conflicts. It is that presence which, while difficult to discern, religious seek in order to stay faithful to the following of Jesus through the option for the poor.¹⁷⁷

11.5 Inculturation of religious life

Before 1979, CLAR was interested in the cultures of Latin America and the challenge that these posed for the inculturation of religious life. Latin American religious through increasing contact with the poor discovered how different their life and ways of thought were from most Latin Americans. A general conclusion was reached that religious, through their formation and community life structures, had, in effect, alienated themselves from the people of Latin America and its cultures. In order to overcome this alienation religious sought inculturation through active participation in the struggles of the poor for liberation.

The need for a liberating evangelization brought more attention to the need for inculturation. The poor's culture was seen as a reservoir of human values which, though manipulated and inconsistent, could offer a clear alternative to the existing

176 CLAR, "Formación para la Nueva Evangelización [X Asamblea General, Cochabamba]," p. 25. CRB, "El religioso-profeta," p. 21-22. A. Moser, *Integración afectiva y compromiso social*, p. 43-48.

177 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Fidelidad y conflicto*, p. 104-114. V. Codina, "Desafíos y perspectivas," in *Espiritualidad del compromiso con los pobres*, Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización, Serie III, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 122-123. CRB, "El religioso-profeta," p. 21.

social order. Yet within the cultures of the poor, there were also formidable barriers which stood in the way of liberation. The most imposing of these was popular religion, which often reinforced the poor's feeling of powerlessness and fatalism in the face of the social reality. In spite of this, there was a belief that popular religion could be purified and become the basis for a Catholicism which would be truly Latin American.¹⁷⁸

After Puebla, inculturation of religious life into Latin America is a major concern within CLAR and is driven by the experience of the *comunidades insertas*, who find the poor's culture difficult to understand. From these experiences, inculturation is viewed as a necessary prerequisite if religious want to have a liberating evangelization and make a clear eschatological witness. Thus the 1989 CLAR General Plan says that the two axes of the *comunidades insertas* are "inculturation and liberation".¹⁷⁹

An attempt is made to answer some of these concerns around culture and inculturation. In 1981 the CLAR theological team studies how culture affects religious and their evangelization. The study is designed as a supplement to *Pueblo de Dios y comunidad liberadora*, based upon reflections from religious in *comunidades insertas*.¹⁸⁰ For the CLAR theologians, a clear link is seen between culture and the socio-political context of oppression. This link demands that anyone who seeks to understand a culture must also pay serious attention to the social structures. Otherwise there is a risk of failing to see how the social structures have penetrated and continue to affect culture.¹⁸¹

The CLAR theologians describe the relationship between culture and society. Culture is seen as a system of signs and symbols that gives a context of meaning for human life, actions and relationships. This system arises from and is always in close connection to the productive systems in a society because human labor is the generator of human culture. For this reason any attempt to change a culture has to consider the social organization of human labor.¹⁸² With this view of the relationship between society and culture, the CLAR theologians conclude that Latin American cultures cannot be understood unless the economic dependency is recognized. For it is dependency which has produced social structures that exploit human labor and creates social changes (e.g. urbanization, and exposure to secularism) which affect the cultures of Latin America.¹⁸³

178 Cf. p. 101-102, 129-130.

179 CLAR, "Plan Global de la CLAR 1989-1991," *Boletín CLAR* 27:6 (junio 1989): 7; (This is published just before the July, 1989 Vatican intervention). M. Agudelo, "Salhonda: Una experiencia de educación integral en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 21:12 (diciembre 1982): 12-15. Sister Agudelo tells of her difficulty in teaching an Afro-Colombian community. F. Varona, "Comunicación y pedagogía de la fe," p. 4-13, esp. 4. Varona stresses the difficulty which surrounds cross-cultural communication.

180 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 9.

181 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 10.

182 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 17-19, 31-33.

183 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 32-46.

As before Puebla, the CLAR theologians deny that there is one homogenous Latin American culture. Instead, there are cultures which are antagonist to one another. The dominant culture of the upper class is oriented to consumerism and through the use of the mass media and ideology seeks a cultural 'hegemony', so that only its cultural values are seen as acceptable. Opposed to the culture of the upper class are the cultures of the poor, which offer an alternative to the dominant culture but one that is deformed and manipulated by the dominant cultures.¹⁸⁴

Nonetheless, while there is no single Latin American culture, there are similarities between the various cultures of the poor. The CLAR theologians see one example of this in the cultural similarities between the Mayas (Guatemala) and the Aymaras (Bolivia). According to the CLAR team:

"The cause of these similarities is not a common Maya-Aymara ancestor, but the fact that both groups are campesinos and share similar positions in a socio-economic structure in their countries of Latin America."¹⁸⁵

In the face of this reality how can religious life inculturate itself into Latin America? For the CLAR theologians, a rupture is necessary with a past inculturation. Religious are not recent arrivals to Latin America but after nearly five hundred years have been inculturated and been given a clear role to fulfill within these cultures. But this role has been marked by the willingness of religious to accept and adapt to a reality of oppression in which they in turn benefit. Thus, for the CLAR theologians, inculturation requires that religious consciously break with this past inculturation of religious life. Only through such a break can religious begin the process of inculturating their life and praxis into the cultures of the poor. Unlike the first inculturation of religious life in Latin America, this new effort demands an inculturation which is prophetic and not supportive of the *status quo* of oppression.¹⁸⁶

This 1981 book by the CLAR theological team provides the most extensive treatment of the relationship between culture and the religious life. The general lines of its approach later appear in the 1987 CLAR study on formation.¹⁸⁷

Within CLAR discussions, three concrete strategies appear for this inculturation of religious life in Latin America. These are not exclusive and point to three different approaches to reach the same goal.

First of all the *comunidades insertas* are viewed as a way in which religious can inculturate religious life into the cultures of Latin America. Religious in the *comunidades insertas* accept their need for integration into the cultures of the poor

184 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 23-30.

185 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 10; ("La causa de estas semejanzas no será un ancestro común maya-aymara, sino el hecho de que ambos grupos son campesinos y comparten posiciones semejantes de una estructura económica y social de sus países de América Latina").

186 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 75-92.

187 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *La formación: Un reto para los religiosos*, p. 149-159, 211-218.

as a part of insertion. This integration leads to a deliberate reformulation of their theology, community structures, and evangelization by religious so that these can be understood by the poor.

Second, CLAR places great hope in the increasing numbers of vocations to religious life who come from the poorer social classes. The 1980 CLAR General Board Meeting comments on this increase and the opportunity which it offers for Latin American religious to further their inculturation. This viewpoint appears in CLAR discussions until the 1989 intervention.¹⁸⁸

The advantages of this approach are clear to CLAR. Through an increase of such vocations, religious congregations could become inculturated from the inside out. The poor youth would bring their own cultural values and spiritual perspectives into the religious life. This would create an inculturated religious life and further reduce the cultural barriers which impede religious in their support of the poor's liberation.

However, this approach to the inculturation of religious life requires change by religious congregations. The acceptance by religious congregations of more popular vocations (i.e. from poorer classes) does not automatically guarantee greater inculturation into the poor's culture. Accompanying this, congregations have to change their formation programs so that these popular vocations are encouraged to hold fast to their cultural values and spirituality.¹⁸⁹

One example of such a formation program is presented before the 1988 CLAR General Assembly. This formation program is designed for Mayan girls in Guatemala who enter the Dominicans Sisters of the Annunciation. In order to allow the postulants to retain their own culture, the Dominican change their formation program, allowing a gradual assimilation of both a new culture and the Dominican spirituality. The goal is neither to change the postulant's Mayan culture nor religiosity but encourage an integration with the Dominican congregation and its spirituality.¹⁹⁰

Finally, the least common, though perhaps most interesting approach, is the establishment of new religious congregations. The advantages of this approach are that a new congregation could be shaped around Latin American indigenous traditions without having to wrestle with an existing congregational charism.

Two examples of this approach appear at the CLAR Tenth General Assembly. The first is the previously mentioned Haitian Brothers of the Incarnation, which are founded to live in *comunidades insertas* among the campesinos.¹⁹¹ Another

188 "Hablan las conferencias nacionales," *Boletín CLAR* 18:5 (mayo 1980): 15. CLAR, "Resultado de la reflexión [VIII Asamblea General, Paraguay]," p. 8, 16. CRB, "Prioridades y líneas de acción," *Boletín CLAR* 24:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1986): 28.

189 C. Boff, "Formación en las comunidades insertas," p. 3-19.

190 "El caminar de dos jóvenes indígenas como Dominicas de la Anunciata en medio de su pueblo Maya K'Ekchi en Alta Verapaz. Experiencia no. 2," in *X Asamblea General de la CLAR. Cochabamba, junio 1-10 de 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988): 213-230.

191 "Representación de las etapas de formación, Haití. Experiencia no. 3," in *X Asamblea General de la CLAR. Cochabamba, junio 1-10 de 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988): 231-234.

example comes from Bolivia, where, assisted by other religious, a new congregation is established for Aymara women to evangelize their people. In this congregation there is no attempt to suppress Aymara beliefs, but rather a focus on education, which is seen as enabling the women to incorporate the congregation's spirituality with traditional Aymara culture.¹⁹²

The evangelization of religious is also in need of inculturation. For the CLAR theologians, this inculturation should be guided by the option for the poor. Through the option, religious empower the poor, enabling their evangelizing potential to emerge. In this way the poor become active evangelizers of their own culture, popular religion and eventually the rest of Latin America. Religious through the option help to conscientize the poor and assist them in their liberation struggle.¹⁹³ For religious, this means a role as an "intellectual organically related to the poor classes," helping them to purify their culture and find a new identity, free from manipulation by the dominant class.¹⁹⁴

The issue of inculturation remains as an ongoing concern until the 1989 Vatican intervention.¹⁹⁵ Particularly troublesome is the ambiguous nature of the popular religion for religious because while it is viewed as one source for a new spirituality of insertion at the same time it is seen as perpetuating values which block human growth and support for liberation. The task for religious, especially those in the *comunidades insertas*, is how to relate to this ambiguous nature of popular religion. No answer is offered other than an attitude of patient listening.

192 J.I. Gómez, M.O. Orozco, and M. Figueredo, "Experiencia de las Misioneras Aymaras. Experiencia no. 1," in *X Asamblea General de la CLAR. Cochabamba, junio 1-10 de 1988* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1988): 200-207. The formation directors for this congregation include: two Bolivian sisters (one Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul and another from the Missionaries of Mary Mother of the Church) as well as Latin American members of the Sisters of Charity and Dominicans of the Presentation. The formation team meets weekly at a nearby house of a Little Brothers of Jesus (a de Foucauld inspired community) in order to plan and discuss problems.

193 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 59-62, 68-70.

194 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Cultura, evangelización y vida religiosa*, p. 70-72; quote from p. 71 ("un intelectual orgánicamente relacionado a las clases populares").

195 C. Vendrôme, "La inculturación: Un reto para la transmisión del mensaje," *Boletín CLAR* 20:10 (octubre 1982): 3-15. J.B. Libânio and F. Taborda, "Valores que queremos proyectar," p. 4-16. Libânio and Taborda ask how the values of the poor can be discovered. Obviously influenced by Jürgen Habermas (though without referring to him), they state that values can be found through inter-subjective dialogue in a 'ideal linguistic state'. For Libânio and Taborda such a state does not exist because the poor cannot freely speak and therefore the Church of the Poor is necessary as a location where the poor's values can arise. M. Azevedo, "La evangelización como misión de la vida religiosa," transcribed by E. Valle, *Boletín CLAR* 25:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1987): 3-31. This is a presentation by Azevedo before the 1987 CLAR General Board Meeting (Haiti). He acknowledges different anthropological approaches to the interpretation of culture and states that the task for religious is to search out the 'seeds of the word', which can be purified for the establishment of a local Church community.

11.6 Priesthood and religious life: A happy combination?

The CLAR theological team does a study in 1981 on the priest-religious at the request of the national conferences and many major superiors who see a tension between the religious life and the priesthood. The purpose of the study is to offer an integrated vision of the priest-religious, showing a balance between the religious life and the demands of priesthood.¹⁹⁶

According to the CLAR theologians, tensions surround the priest-religious that need to be addressed. Through the congregational charism, religious are called prophetically to witness in the world; while as priests they must participate in the local church's pastoral activities. Tension arises from trying to fulfill these two roles. Another source of friction arises from the double institutional loyalties of the priest-religious. He is simultaneously a member of a religious congregation with its charism and a pastoral agent of the local diocese. For the CLAR theologians, these tensions reveal that the priest-religious suffers from a crisis of identity, trying to balance these different pastoral and institutional roles.¹⁹⁷

The CLAR theologians then state that there are different foci by religious life and the priesthood. Religious life focuses on witness to the world which manifests martyrdom, witness of faith and the Kingdom of God in human history. The priesthood's focus is on diaconal service through the proclamation of the Gospel and providing the sacraments to the people. Yet in spite of these different foci, the CLAR theologians identify common elements. Both religious life and the priesthood are seen as ways to follow Christ within the People of God. Similarly, the priest, like the religious also has a clear eschatological witness as helping to form the People of God, which is a sign of the Kingdom for all.¹⁹⁸

Seeing these common elements between religious life and the priesthood, the CLAR theologians argue that the option for the poor can allow the priest-religious to achieve a balance between both his roles, as priest and religious. The reason for this is that in the context of Latin America the following of Jesus is seen as leading all Christians to the option for the poor and support for liberation.¹⁹⁹ Thus, for the CLAR theologians, the option for the poor is seen as the means by which the tensions between religious life and priesthood can be resolved.

11.7 Authority in religious life

Concern was expressed before Puebla about the demands and limits of obedience in religious communities. Seeing the abuses of past practices many religious were convinced of the need for new community structures where obedience could be in relation to subsidiarity and the need for personal development. One attempt to

196 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso*, p. 11-13.

197 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso*, p. 19-20.

198 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso*, p. 50-53.

199 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, *Espiritualidad del sacerdote religioso*, p. 54-74.

concretely create such a new community structure was made by the small communities which sought flexibility in their internal life.

After Puebla, the issue of religious obedience is seldom directly addressed. There is rather concern about the general issue of authority in religious life. This concern arises from the practice of the *comunidades insertas*.

Clodovis Boff discusses the role of authority in religious life, which, for him, must represent a clear alternative to the common abuse of power in Latin American societies. According to Boff, the *CEBS* and the *comunidades insertas* present such an alternative view of authority which goes beyond traditional sociological and philosophical ideas. Within both the *CEBS* and the *comunidades insertas*, authority is always seen in relation to the community and the common good, rather than considered abstractly.²⁰⁰ For Boff, the authority of the *CEBS* and the *comunidades insertas* can be seen as biblically based. Reviewing the Gospels and the New Testament, Boff shows how Jesus' exercise of authority was neither for domination nor control but service and the animation of His disciples. This view of authority was also present within the early Church as it now is in the *CEBS*.²⁰¹ Boff's reflection on authority reaches two important conclusions. First, that while the ultimate source of all authority is God, within a religious community it must flow from the members. Second, following *Lumen Gentium's* stress on service and the People of God, authority within the Church should be seen differently. Authority is for the post-conciliar Church is linked to service. For Boff:

"this corresponds exactly to the new problematic of power which we here outline: to understand organized power beginning with a living and participating society or the reverse."²⁰²

Another reflection on authority in religious life is made by J.B. Libânio who also sees changes in how it is understood within religious communities. Libânio states that collegiality has become important in the post-conciliar Church and this can be seen as, "the ecclesial version of the democratization of the Western governments beginning with the French Revolution."²⁰³ Like Boff, Libânio states that authority in religious life should be understood in relation to the context of Latin America. The reason for this is the society's understanding of authority, which denies participation to the poor, had been replicated in religious life, creating clericalism and paternalism.

This replication of social structures has affected internal life of religious communities as well as its evangelization. Within communities, religious were taught to be submissive and passive, sometimes with devastating consequences on an individual's emotional and psychological development. Authoritarian authority

200 C. Boff, *El Evangelio del poder-servicio*, 2nd ed. Colección CLAR 55 (Rio de Janeiro: CRB, 1984; repr. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988): 9-12.

201 C. Boff, *El Evangelio del poder-servicio*, p. 51-65.

202 C. Boff, *El Evangelio del poder-servicio*, p. 30-31; quotation is from p. 31.

203 J.B. Libânio, "La vida religiosa a las puertas," p. 10.

structures also affected religious' evangelization efforts leading them to mirror "with the people the same relation of subjection-domination, experienced in religious life... In the pastoral we transformed ourselves into dominators."²⁰⁴

11.8 New Evangelization

The 1983 call by Pope John Paul II for a new evangelization is accepted as demanding a break with former means of evangelization. Within CLAR, this break is interpreted as support for a liberating evangelization, making the poor and their concerns a new center for the Church.²⁰⁵

Yet some religious doubt if everyone has the same understanding of the New Evangelization. Víctor Codina addresses this question and begins with a short review of the first evangelization of Latin America. According to Codina, there were three different approaches taken by Spanish and Portuguese missionaries during the first evangelization. A first approach submitted to the will and wishes of the conquerors, identifying the Gospel with the political goals of the European invaders. Contrasted to this was a more moderate approach which, while supporting the colonization, actively defended the rights of the Indians. Finally, there was a liberation approach, represented by Bartholome de las Casas. This approach went beyond a defence of human rights and challenged the legitimacy of the European enslavement of the Indian peoples.

The importance of these three approaches to evangelization is not merely historical. Rather, for Codina, these approaches remain and represent three rival interpretations of the Pope's call for a New Evangelization. A spiritualist approach stresses personal perfection and doctrinal instruction. A centrist approach is aware of the socio-political realities but distances itself from involvement in these. Finally, a liberative approach stresses the need for liberation and a focus on the Kingdom as a part of any new evangelization.

Linked to these approaches, Codina also identifies three different ways in which religious understand their eschatological witness as part of evangelization. For the spiritualist approach, the Kingdom is seen as a spiritual presence within a person's soul. With this understanding, religious focus on personal perfection and fidelity to the evangelical counsels as a way to model the Kingdom. The centrist approach stresses the presence of the Kingdom within the Church. Religious are for this approach called to model community and support the Church's mission in the

204 J.B. Libânio, "La vida religiosa a las puertas," p. 11; ("Reproducemos con el pueblo la misma relación de sujeción-dominación en la vida religiosa... Y en la pastoral, nos transformamos en dominadores").

205 R. Antoncich, "Una vida religiosa al servicio de la Nueva Evangelización en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 22:12 (diciembre 1984): 3-15. L. Ugalde, "XXII Junta Directiva [XXII Junta Directiva, Haití]," p. 4. CLAR, "Formación para la Nueva Evangelización," p. 21-28.

world. Finally, the liberative approach recognizes the Kingdom's presence inside the Church as well as outside it. Religious' eschatological witness demands that they model the Kingdom and work for its construction in human history.²⁰⁶

206 V. Codina, "Vida religiosa y evangelización de América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 27:1-2 (enero-febrero 1989): 3-27. Similar in: C. Caliman, "Evangelizar hoy en América Latina a partir de la vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 21: 8-9 (agosto-septiembre 1983): 20-25, 38. Compare with the discussion on rival ecclesiologies in ch. 10.

Part V

Conflict with the Vatican and a case of rival interpretations

Introduction

As previously seen CLAR's relationship with the hierarchy was marked with suspicion and tension, especially after 1972. The hierarchy strongly opposed several positions adopted by CLAR and were anxious over its advocacy of a Church of the Poor. For some bishops this advocacy was interpreted as further evidence that CLAR was becoming a 'parallel magisterium', challenging CELAM.

Unfortunately, this relationship with the hierarchy does not improve after Puebla and becomes a source of concern for the Vatican. During his 1986 visit to Colombia, Pope John Paul II tells CLAR that religious need to witness ecclesial communion through obedience to CELAM and their local bishops.¹ The tensions between CLAR and CELAM, however, do not end but escalate until the 1989 Vatican intervention into CLAR's government.

Chapter 12 looks at this unfortunate period of CLAR's history. There is an examination of the tensions which cloud the relationship between CLAR and the hierarchy in 1989.

Following this, there is a look at the initial 1989 Vatican intervention and subsequent actions which restrict CLAR's governance. Lastly, Chapter 12 shows that CRIS and CLAR have different explanations for the 1989 action by the Vatican.

Chapter 13 concludes this study with an analysis of how certain key issues, which separate CLAR's contextual theology of religious life from the Magisterium, flow from different interpretations of the Second Vatican Council.

1 John Paul II, "A la presidencia y miembros de la confederación latinoamericana de religiosos," *Boletín CLAR* 24:8 (agosto 1986): 11-14.

12 Growing tensions and the magisterial intervention

12.0 Introduction

Chapter 12 examines the growing tensions between CLAR and the hierarchy which immediately precede the 1989 Vatican intervention. There is also a description of the events surrounding the appointment of Jorge Jiménez as CLAR Secretary General and later acts by the Vatican to further restrict CLAR. Finally, CLAR and CRIS identify different reasons as lying behind the intervention.

12.1 Tensions

There are increasing tensions which surround the relationship between CLAR and the hierarchy as well the Vatican interventions into CLAR's government. Two of these stand out as extremely volatile, the *Palabra-Vida* project and the vacancy in the position of CLAR secretary general.

Palabra-Vida

Flowing from a decision at the 1986 CLAR General Board Meeting, the *Palabra-Vida* project is formulated as CLAR's contribution to the Fifth Centenary commemoration. It is designed for a five year period, beginning with Advent 1988. As a part of this project a new CLAR book series begins, *Colección Palabra-Vida*, and an introductory booklet is published which is given a wide distribution with over 100,000 copies in Spanish and 25,000 in Portuguese.²

The intent of *Palabra-Vida* is to teach religious communities the poor's perspective on the Bible through a series of programmed readings. The starting point of this program is that biblical texts must be read in relation to the socio-political context of oppression. For CLAR, *Palabra-Vida* is seen as a modern version of the *divina lectura* which is faithful to the early Tradition's way of reading the Bible and breaks with past legitimization of the social *status quo*. In short, the *Palabra-Vida* is designed to free religious to read the Bible from the poor's perspective in order to assist a New Evangelization that contributes to the poor's liberation.³

2 "A confederação latinoamericana dos religiosos questionada em seu projeto 'Palavra-Vida'," *SEDOC*, vol. 22 (julho-agosto 1989): 2-3. Secretariado general de la CLAR, *Proyecto 'Palabra-Vida' 1988-1993: La Palabra convoca* (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1988).

3 Secretariado general de la CLAR, "Proyecto Palabra-Vida: La Palabra convoca," *Boletín CLAR* 26:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1988): 4-6. L. Coscia, "Hermanos y hermanas," *Boletín CLAR*

Palabra-Vida is originally designated only for religious yet at the Twenty-Third General Board Meeting (El Salvador, 1989) some national conferences had begun to use it with the people. The Bolivian Conference of Religious justifies this use of *Palabra-Vida* as a way to bring religious communities closer to the poor through a joint reading of the Bible.⁴

Opposition to *Palabra-Vida* soon appears, spearheaded by CELAM. On February 10, 1989 CELAM issues a press statement which expresses 'serious concern' about *Palabra-Vida*. The bishops view the project as reductionistic and based upon a Marxist hermeneutic for the interpretation of the Bible. Further opposition arises from the use of *Palabra-Vida* among the people, which some bishops interpret as proof that CLAR is trying to dictate pastoral policy for the Latin American Church.⁵ As a result of these charges, the *Palavra-Vida* project becomes a principal topic of discussion at the CELAM Twenty-Second Ordinary Assembly (Curaçao, March 5-12, 1989). At this meeting, CLAR President Coscia tries to answer objections to the project. He denies that *Palabra-Vida* deviates from magisterial teachings on the interpretation of the Bible. Coscia also answers an objection that CLAR had erred in not seeking prior episcopal approval for *Palabra y Vida*. According to Coscia, *Palabra-Vida* had been presented to representatives of CELAM and CRIS on various occasions in 1986 and 1987 at which times no objections were voiced. Furthermore CLAR sought no *imprimatur* for *Palabra-Vida* because it was seen as unnecessary. *Palabra-Vida* was not intended for the presentation of Church dogma but as a program of planned Bible reading for religious commun-

26:11-12 (noviembre-diciembre 1988): 2-3. C. Maccise, "La experiencia bíblica de Dios," p. 8-21. *Palabra-Vida* is structured with a different focus each year: the first year concentrates on the Bible in general and reading it from the poor's perspective; the second year focuses on the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges; the following year stresses the prophets, the historical books, and wisdom literature; the fourth year is dedicated to the Gospels; and the final year focuses on the Acts of the Apostles, the Pauline letters, and the Apocalypse.

- 4 "Documento 6," in CLAR 30 años, XXIII Junta Directiva. El Salvador, abril 10-19, 1989 (Bogotá: CLAR, 1989): 71-82, 99, 107, 115, 126-133. The expansion of *Palabra-Vida* to include lay people is noted in the national conference reports from El Salvador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia CLAR a la XXIII Junta Directiva. El Salvador, abril 10 de 1989," *Boletín CLAR* 27:4-5 (abril-mayo 1989): 10. Coscia states that some religious plan to use *Palabra-Vida* in pastoral work.
- 5 Presidencia do CELAM, "Comunicado à imprensa do CELAM," SEDOC 22 (julho-agosto 1989): 27-28. This press statement appears in the Colombian newspaper *El Catolicismo* and the Spanish edition of *Osservatore Romano*. A. López Trujillo and R.E. Aristizábal, "Carta da conferência episcopal da Colombia ao presidente da CLAR," SEDOC 22 (julho-agosto 1989): 23-24. Cardinal López Trujillo is a major opponent of the *Palabra-Vida*. L. Coscia, "Informe de presidencia [XXII Junta Directiva, El Salvador]," p. 10-11. "Documento 6," in CLAR 30 años XXIII Junta Directiva. El Salvador, p. 64-70, 87-92, 101-102, 136-137. The national religious' conferences for Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, and Venezuela mention that some bishops see *Palabra-Vida* as an example of CLAR trying to usurp CELAM's authority.

ities. In spite of Coscia's pleading, the CELAM Ordinary Assembly votes that the *Palabra-Vida* project needs clarification and certain corrections.⁶

While opposed to the pastoral use of *Palabra-Vida*, the CELAM President Dario Castrillón Hoyos and Secretary General Oscar A. Rodríguez, writing to the Brazilian episcopal conference (CNBB), give another justification for their opposition:

"It is true that the religious life in its internal regulations do not depend directly on the bishops, but in their pastoral projection to the People of God (can. 678). This project is connected with a new evangelization of the faithful in Latin America, after 500 years of the earlier evangelization."⁷

Thus the CELAM leadership sees its right to act against *Palabra-Vida* as grounded on the project's connection to the New Evangelization and not on its expanded use by religious among the laity.

CELAM's opposition soon triggers action by the Vatican. In February of 1989, CRIS judges *Palabra-Vida* as an ideological reading of the Bible which ignores magisterial teachings (especially *Libertatis Nuntius* and *Libertatis Conscientia*). The *Palabra-Vida* is further seen as centering its attention on the Exodus story and not Jesus Christ. CRIS Secretary Vincente Fagiolo tells President Coscia that CLAR should cooperate with CELAM in the preparation of a new *Palabra-Vida* which adheres to magisterial teachings. Fagiolo also advises CLAR to seek an *imprimatur* for *Palabra-Vida* because of the nature of the project.⁸

After much consultation and discussion, a meeting is held in Bogotá, Colombia (April 24-25) with Bishop Fagiolo from CRIS and representatives from CLAR and CELAM. The result of the meeting is an agreement which allows *Palabra-Vida* project to continue. For its part CLAR agrees:

- 1 to suspend distribution and use of existing project books, and to rewrite these, avoiding an ideological treatment of Scripture;
- 2 to add a new introduction to the project's books which stresses the importance of the magisterial teachings and Tradition in the reading of the Bible;

6 L. Coscia, "Ao conselho episcopal latino-americano – CELAM XXI Assembléia Ordinária," *SEDOC* (julho-agosto 1989): 43-45. "Recomendaciones," *CELAM*, no. 225 (marzo 1989): 46; (from the XII CELAM Ordinary Assembly).

7 D. Castrillón Hoyos and O.A. Rodríguez, "Carta da presidencia do CELAM ao presidente da CNBB," *SEDOC* 22 (julho-agosto 1989): 30; ("É verdade que a vida religiosa em seu regimento interno não depende diretamente dos Bispos, mas sua projeção pastoral em relação ao Povo de Deus, sim, depende deles (cân. 678), e este projeto se relaciona com uma 'nova' evangelização dos fiéis da América Latina, depois 500 anos da evangelização 'anterior'").

8 CRIS, "1 Parecer do consultor da CRIS, Prot. n. AG. 3-4/88," *SEDOC* 22 (julho-agosto 1989): 11-14. Idem, "2 Parecer do consultor da CRIS," *SEDOC* 22 (julho-agosto 1989): 14-20. V. Fagiolo, "Nota da Congregação para os Institutos de Vida Consagrada e para Sociedades de Vida Apostólica referente ao projeto 'Palavra-Vida,'" *SEDOC* 22 (julho-agosto 1989): 20-21.

- 3 to cooperate with CELAM in redrafting the *Palabra-Vida*; and
- 4 to change the name to *Plan Palabra-Vida*.⁹

The controversy surrounding the *Palabra-Vida* appears to have been resolved so that it can continue, although with modifications.

The Secretary General. In search of a replacement

The 1988 CLAR General Assembly (Cochabamba, Bolivia) elects new officers, as required by the Statutes. Of particular importance is the position of Secretary General who is responsible for CLAR's day-to-day operations as well as the co-ordination of its continental activities. Since 1981, Sister Hermengarda Martins had occupied the position but the CLAR Statutes bar her from a third term. At the General Assembly the delegates elect Brazilian Brother Claudino Falquetto as Sister Martins' successor. He accepts election on two conditions: the approval of his superiors, and a one year delay in the begin from his term (to July 1989) when he ends his period as president of the Brazilian Religious Conference. The General Assembly accepts both conditions and asks Sister Martins to remain as Secretary General until July 1989.¹⁰

The election of Brother Falquetto is, however, clouded by several problems. First there was faulty preparation for the election by the CLAR leadership. As CLAR President Coscia acknowledges, the 1987 CLAR General Board Meeting failed to prepare a list of candidates for Secretary General as required by the Statutes. A second problem was that since Brother Falquetto gave only conditional acceptance to his election, it was canonically invalid. Finally, there was the General Assembly's decision that Sister Martins continue as Secretary General until July 1989. CRIS in November 1988 confirms Brother Falquetto as Secretary General in spite of his conditional acceptance and declares that Sister Martins may not continue as Secretary General, since she had served the maximum term allowable. Until Brother Falquetto assumes the secretary generalate, Sister Martins is told to sign all correspondence as 'legal representative' or 'acting for the Secretary General'.¹¹ Making the situation more difficult, Brazilian Province of the Marists elects Brother Falquetto as their provincial in February 1989. Brother Falquetto accepts this election and officially resigns his position as Secretary General.

At the 1989 General Board Meeting, CLAR President Coscia discusses the vacancy in the office of Secretary General with the rest of the CLAR leadership. The

9 CLAR and CELAM, "CELAM-CLAR Comunicado," *Boletín CLAR* 27:4-5 (abril-mayo 1989): 28-29.

10 L. Coscia, I.J. Nery, and C. Quiroz, "Medida excepcional en el secretariado de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989): 2.

11 CLAR, "Estatutos de la CLAR," in *XI Asamblea General de la CLAR. México, febrero 29 de 1991* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1991): Art. 27, no. 5. L. Coscia, "Informe de presidencia [XXIII Junta Directiva, El Salvador]," p. 8-9. L. Coscia, I.J. Nery, and C. Quiroz, "Medida excepcional en el secretariado de la CLAR," p. 1-3.

General Board cannot directly fill the position but must forward nominations to CRIS.¹² The General Board's first choice is Sister Beatriz Becerra of Mexico whose provincial denies her permission to accept the post. The General Board Meeting ends without having chosen a candidate but empowers President Coscia to select the nominee for the vacant Secretary General position.

On April 23 President Coscia obtains the consent of Sister Manuelita Charria and her provincial. The name of Sister Charria is forwarded CRIS for approval.¹³

The comunidades insertas

The *comunidades insertas* are also a source of much controversy. At the 1989 Twenty-Third General Board Meeting, President Coscia refers to the *comunidades insertas* as "a vital and delicate theme for CLAR and the national conferences." So delicate, in fact, that he sees the need to clarify CLAR's position which is not that "all religious ought to be inserted among the poor nor that they ought to abandon traditional places of presence."¹⁴

The *comunidades insertas* are a source of tension with many bishops. At a 1988 meeting between bishops and major superiors in Central America, the *comunidades insertas* are one of the two principal topics for discussion. While praising the example of the *comunidades insertas* as modelling the Incarnation and demanding conversion, certain tensions are seen as surrounding their praxis. The *comunidades insertas* are viewed as often having conflictive relationships with their congregations (especially concerning political actions and the re-interpretation of the founding charisms) as well as within the local church. This perception leads some bishops to see the *comunidades insertas* as ideological and a threat to religious life. The 1988 meeting concludes with a decision by the bishops and major superiors to increase their mutual co-operation in the support and formation for the *comunidades insertas*.¹⁵

Another source of tension arises from the use of the *comunidades insertas* as locations for religious formation. Pope John Paul II, speaking before a 1986 gathering of Brazilian major superiors, declares that the *comunidades insertas* are inappropriate for formation houses because they lack material resources to meet the educational, spiritual and cultural needs of young religious.¹⁶

12 CLAR, "Estatutos de la CLAR," Article 28, no. 2.

13 L. Coscia, I.J. Nery, and C. Quiroz, "Medida excepcional en el secretariado de la CLAR," p. 3.

14 L. Coscia, "Informe de presidencia [XXIII Junta Directiva, El Salvador]," p. 14; (Both quotations are from page 14).

15 "Encuentro de obispos y superiores mayores de Centro América y Panamá," *Boletín CLAR* 27:6 (junio 1989): 14-16. CLAR and CELAM, "Documento final," in *Evangelización, jerarquía y carisma. Primer encuentro latinoamericano de obispos y religiosos*, DEVICON 91 (Bogotá: CELAM Departamento de Vida Consagrada, 1987): 145.

16 John Paul II, "Juan Pablo II a los superiores y superiores mayores del Brasil," *Boletín CLAR* 24:8 (agosto 1986): 15-17. Formation in the *comunidades insertas* is a major theme of the CLAR Tenth General Assembly in 1988.

Evangelization

A variety of tensions between CELAM and CLAR over evangelization surface at a 1986 meeting between representatives of CLAR and CELAM's Department of Consecrated Life (DEVICON). An initial source of tension is, following a charge heard since 1972, that CLAR is becoming a 'parallel magisterium' and usurping CELAM's authority to set pastoral policy for Latin America.¹⁷

Further tension arises from the option for the poor and its relationship to evangelization. For some bishops, CLAR's evangelization has become too ideological, emphasizing more the denunciation of social injustice than the proclamation of the Gospel. There is additional objection to CLAR's support for religious who leave traditional ministries, such as health care and education in order to accept pastoral work with the poor. Related to this, CELAM objects to the participation of religious in political actions. For the bishops, such participation is judged as an infringement upon the rights of the laity, who are given responsibility for bringing Christian values to the political arena. Finally, the relationship between religious and the bishops in evangelization is seen as a source of friction. The bishops remind religious that their evangelization is not independent but always under the supervision of the local bishop.¹⁸

Different visions of religious life

The 1986 joint CELAM-CLAR meeting also reveals, in fact, that the CELAM leadership has a vision of religious life, which differs from CLAR's.

For Bishop Oscar Rodríguez (Tegucigalpa, Honduras), the president of DEVICON, "Consecration is the basis of religious life" and leads religious to observance of the evangelical counsels as the concrete way to follow Christ and make a public witness of the Kingdom. Through consecration, religious bind themselves to the Church's mission differently than the laity and as a consequent should be disponible to the evangelization needs of the Church under the local bishops. Additionally, through consecration religious are seen as having a duty of obedience to the magisterial teaching of the Church. Finally for Bishop Rodríguez, the consecration of religious and their observance of the evangelical counsels are important for the entire Church. For this reason, the hierarchy must ensure that religious remain faithful to their consecration and the evangelical counsels.¹⁹

17 CLAR and CELAM, "Anexos," in *Evangelización, jerarquía y carisma. Primer encuentro latinoamericano de obispos y religiosos*, DEVICON 91 (Bogotá: CELAM Departamento de Vida Consagrada, 1987): 157. D. Castrillón Hoyos, "Religiosos y obispos en América Latina," in *Evangelización, jerarquía y carisma*, p. 37-38.

18 D. Castrillón Hoyos, "Religiosos y obispos en América Latina," p. 35-40. CLAR and CELAM, "Anexos," p. 155-156. John Paul II, "Confianza en la misión de la vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 28:7-8 (julio-agosto 1980): 3-6. O.A. Rodríguez, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," in *Evangelización, jerarquía y carisma*, DEVICON 91 (Bogotá: CELAM Departamento de Vida Consagrada, 1987): 20-25. W. Tepe, "Religiosos na igreja particular," in *Evangelización, jerarquía y carisma*, p. 56-62. John Paul II, "Juan Pablo II a los religiosos, San Pablo, 3 de julio de 1980," *Boletín CLAR*, 18:7-8 (julio-agosto 1980): 9.

19 O.A. Rodríguez, "Los religiosos en la Iglesia," p. 12-24; (quotation is from p. 16).

Bishop Darío Castrillón Hoyos, CELAM Secretary General, echoes this vision of the religious life and adds:

"The first and principal obligation of religious is the contemplation of the divine and constant union with God in prayer. The religious is worth more to the Church in what s/he is than what s/he does. The value of activity is great but the value of his/her being more so."²⁰

This different vision of religious life includes another understanding of the relationship between religious and the hierarchy. Bishop Walfredo Tepe discusses the structural relationship of religious to the hierarchy. For the bishop tension between the hierarchy and religious (as well as with the laity) is natural and flows from the Church's structure. Nonetheless, Bishop Tepe objects to any ecclesiology which pits a charismatic element (i.e. religious life) against an institutional one (the hierarchy). For Bishop Tepe, such a view is incomplete since both religious life and the hierarchy are the result of God's action, the former from the inspiration of the Spirit and the later through institution by Christ.²¹

Accumulation of tensions

These tensions should not be seen as isolated complaints but are viewed by CELAM as a list of grievances against CLAR. This is evident at the April 25 meeting on the *Palabra-Vida* project, where CELAM Secretary General Bishop Oscar Rodríguez states that:

- CLAR has been acting as a parallel magisterium since 1974;
- CLAR has been spreading a form of liberation theology which is opposed to magisterial teachings;
- *Palabra-Vida* is an example of a Marxist reading of the Bible;
- CLAR has an ideological and class based view of the option for the poor;
- CLAR supports the *comunidades insertas* which the bishops see as dangerous, especially for women religious who lack philosophical and theological training;
- CLAR advocates the *comunidades insertas* and the *CEBs* as a way to create a rival popular church;
- CLAR is challenging CELAM in determining pastoral policy for Latin America;
- CLAR's accepts the 'black legend' about the first evangelization of Latin America, a view which CELAM rejects;
- CLAR does not have sufficient coordination with the national conferences of religious.²²

20 D. Castrillón Hoyos, "Religiosos y obispos en América Latina," p. 31-35, quotation is from p. 34; ("la primera obligación de los religiosos es entonces, la contemplación de las cosas divinas y la constante unión con Dios en oración. El religioso vale más para la Iglesia por lo que es que por lo que hace. El valor de actividad es muy grande, pero el valor de su ser, es mucho mayor").

21 W. Tepe, "Religiosos na igreja particular," p. 44-53.

22 I.J. Nery, "CLAR: A vida religiosa e os desafios de uma crise," *SEDOC* 24 (julho-agosto 1991): 76-77.

12.2 Intervention

By May of 1989 both principal sources of tension between CLAR and the hierarchy appear to have been resolved. An agreement was reached with CELAM and CRIS over the *Palabra-Vida*, allowing it to continue though with substantial revisions. With the official resignation of Brother Falquetto, President Coscia forwarded the name of a nominee as new Secretary General to CRIS. This controversy was also viewed as over.

Yet appearances are sometimes deceptive and so it is in this case. In July of 1989, the Vatican officially intervenes into the government of CLAR. Stronger measures follow, reaching a climax with the suspension of the CLAR Statutes for the 1991 General Assembly. *Palabra-Vida* is also a victim, as the April agreement is rescinded and new demands are made.

The appointment of Jiménez and the Palabra-Vida

On July 5, 1989 Bishop Fagiolo (CRIS) notifies CLAR that the vacancy in secretary generalate has been filled. CRIS rejects CLAR's nomination of Sister Charria and instead appoints Jorge Jiménez²³ as Secretary General with Sister Charria as his assistant.²⁴ This appointment, in effect, places one of CLAR's most important administrative positions under the control of someone not recommended by the CLAR presidency.

The CLAR leadership is shocked by the appointment and searches for a response. President Coscia contacts CRIS in search of an explanation. In the meantime a special meeting of the CLAR General Board is held between August 30 and September 1 (Quito, Ecuador) in order to discuss the appointment and CLAR's possible responses. While expressing obedience and loyalty to the Church, the General Board writes Cardinal Hamer:

"we have received the appointments through the Congregation as a real intervention into CLAR. They have not taken into account the Statutes and passed over those who ought to take the corresponding decisions."²⁵

CLAR President Coscia and two of his vice-presidents²⁶ travel to Rome, hoping to persuade the Congregation to withdraw the appointment of Jiménez. From September 12 until September 16 the CLAR leaders meet with Cardinal Hamer, Bishop Fagiolo, and Cardinal Ratzinger (Congregation for the Doctrine of the

23 He is at this time the provincial of the Eudists for Peru and Colombia.

24 L. Coscia, I.J. Nery, and C. Quiroz, "Medida excepcional en el secretariado de la CLAR," p. 3.

25 CLAR, "La Junta Directiva de la CLAR [carta, I Junta Directiva Extraordinaria, septiembre 9 de 1989]," *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989): 4; ("hemos recibido los nombramientos hechos por ese Dicasterio como una real intervención a la CLAR. No se han tenido los Estatutos y se ha pasado por encima de quienes deben tomar las decisiones correspondientes").

26 Br. Israel José Nery and Sister Coralia Haydee Quiroz. The third vice-president, Gregorio Iriarte, does not attend the meetings.

Faith). Initial hopes for a dialogue over the conflict or the withdrawal of Jiménez's appointment are shattered. The Vatican's only concern is that the CLAR leadership obediently accepts the CRIS decision.²⁷

Further protests by CLAR prove fruitless. Consequently, on October 11 Jorge Jiménez assumes the office of Secretary General with Sister Charria as his assistant. Thus beginning a tense relationship between them and CLAR President Coscia.²⁸

The *Palabra-Vida* project is once again a source of dispute. In spite of the April 25 agreement, new concerns surface. Cardinal Ratzinger repeats earlier charges and advises CLAR to adhere to the "doctrinal observations that were sent by the Congregation for Religious."²⁹ CLAR is told to prepare a new version of *Palabra-Vida* in co-operation with CELAM. Finally, Cardinal Ratzinger, following the rationale earlier seen by Bishop Rodríguez, states that the *Palabra-Vida* "is set up as a true instrument of evangelization with a definite social influence."³⁰

CLAR tries to reach an agreement on *Palabra-Vida*. This effort is complicated by a further demand from Cardinal Hamer that any CLAR theologian on the project receive the approval of his/her episcopal conference. Unfortunately, after the appointment of Jiménez, the relationship between CLAR and CELAM becomes so strained that discussion is no longer possible. As a result, President Coscia tells the 1990 General Board Meeting:

"The presidency of CLAR has decided with much pain not to continue with this Project and leave the initiative of biblical formation to the responsibility of each national conference."³¹

Even this official cancellation of the *Palabra-Vida* does not end the controversy surrounding the project. In May of 1990 CRIS tells President Coscia to make a "public acceptance of the 'doctrinal judgement' of the Holy See" on the *Palabra-Vida* project. This he does in a July 8, 1990 letter to all Latin American religious.³²

27 J. Hamer (carta 29 de septiembre de 1989) [Letter to President Coscia], *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989): 1-2.

28 L. Coscia, I.J. Nery, and C. Quiroz, "Medida excepcional en el secretariado de la CLAR," p. 8.

29 J. Ratzinger, (carta 25 de septiembre de 1989) [President Coscia], *Boletín CLAR*, (octubre 1989).

30 J. Ratzinger, (carta 25 de septiembre de 1989) [President Coscia], *Boletín CLAR*, (octubre 1989): 1 page; ("...se constituya en un verdadero instrumento de evangelización con una justa proyección social"). L. Coscia, (carta 10 de octubre de 1989) [presidents of the national conferences of religious in Latin America], *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989): 1-2. President Coscia says that Cardinal Ratzinger sees *Palabra-Vida* as having an ideological hermeneutic, reductionistic, and failing to adhere to magisterial teachings.

31 L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia CLAR a la XXIV Junta Directiva. Lima, Perú," *Boletín CLAR* 28:3-4 (marzo-abril 1990): 10-11; (quotation is from p. 11).

32 L. Coscia, "Comunicado," *Boletín CLAR* 28:8 (agosto 1990): 27-28. It is worth noting that

The effects of the intervention

The CLAR leadership decides to publish the correspondence with the Vatican over *Palabra-Vida* and the appointment of Jiménez in a special edition of the *Boletín CLAR*. This action is taken, according to President Coscia, "as a service to the truth" for the entire Church. After publication this correspondence is re-published throughout the world. While giving publicity to CLAR's position, its effect is to further strain relations with the Vatican.³³

Another effect of the intervention is that a small group of religious occupy the CELAM offices in Bogota. President Coscia, responding to accusations, states that the occupation is the action of only a small group of religious and in no way represents the position of the majority.³⁴

More serious are the repercussions upon CLAR's functioning. As a result of the Vatican intervention and criticism of the *Palabra-Vida* project, the entire CLAR biblical team, under the leadership of Edênio Valle (Brazil) resigns.³⁵ The majority of the other theologians who lead the CLAR seminars and formation programs follow suit.³⁶ At the request of President Coscia the CLAR theological team remains, although their effectiveness is now limited because of publishing restrictions placed on CLAR.³⁷ In effect, CLAR's ability to influence Latin American religious life and evangelization grinds to a halt.

this is the same issue of the *Boletín CLAR* which contains the Pope's 1990 letter to the Latin American religious. A defence of the CLAR project is offered by: Carlos Mesters, "O Projecto 'Palavra-Vida' e a leitura fiel da Bíblia de acordo com a tradição e o magistério da Igreja," *Revista de Interpretação Bíblica Latinoamericana* (Petrópolis: 1989): 90-104. A. Parra, "Hermenêutica Palavra-Vida: Hermenêutica dos pobres," *Grande Sinal*, vol. 52 (1989): 593-606. C. Maccise, "El Proyecto 'Palabra-Vida de la Confederación Latinoamericana de Religiosos (CLAR). Reflexiones sobre una controversia," conference given before the USIG (?), mimeo.

- 33 Secretariado general de la CLAR, ed., "Medida excepcional en el secretariado de la CLAR." L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia [XXIV Junta Directiva, Lima, Peru]," p. 8; (quotations from page 8). "Conflict tussen Rome en de CLAR," *Wereldbrief* (december 1989). Missionszentrale der Franziskaner, *Ende einer Hoffnung. Dokumentation des Konfliktes um das CLAR Projekt Wort und Leben* (Bonn 1989). The last two mentioned sources are the Dutch and German translations of the "Medida excepcional en el secretariado de la CLAR."
- 34 L. Coscia (carta 12 de octubre de 1989) [presidents of the national conferences of religious of Latin America], p. 1.
- 35 L. Coscia (carta 12 de octubre de 1989) [presidents of the national conferences of religious in Latin America], p. 1-2. E. Valle (carta 8 de octubre de 1989), [letter to L. Coscia], *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989): 2 pages.
- 36 R. Oliveros (carta 8 de octubre de 1989) [letter to President Coscia], *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989): 2 pages. L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia [XXIV Junta Directiva, Lima, Peru]," p. 7. President Coscia states that the most members of these CLAR teams resign.
- 37 L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia [XXIV Junta Directiva, Lima, Peru]," p. 9. C. Boff, *Pastoral de la clase media en la perspectiva de la liberación*, Colección CLAR 60 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1992). Between 1988 and 1992 this is the only one addition to the *Colección CLAR* series. The *Colección Inserción y Nueva Evangelización* series is stopped after publishing only 6 of its planned 24 volumes, cf. p. 204-205.

As a consequence of the resignations and uncertainty surrounding the future, President Coscia announces at the 1990 XXIV General Board Meeting (Lima, Peru) a suspension of the General Plan and all CLAR programs.³⁸ He concludes that "CLAR has been killed in full vitality."³⁹

Making matters worse, CLAR's precarious financial situation is put in jeopardy. Relying throughout the years on sizable contributions from foreign Catholic aid organizations (mostly from West Europe), CLAR suddenly discovers that some major contributors are re-thinking their financial commitments in the light of the Vatican intervention.⁴⁰

Harmony within the leadership of CLAR is also a casualty of the Vatican intervention. The tension between President Coscia and Jorge Jiménez develops into an ongoing strife, marked by mutual distrust. This situation reaches a low point at the 1990 General Board Meeting when Jiménez accuses the former CLAR leadership of financial irregularities and mismanagement of the CLAR Archives. He makes these charges without consulting past CLAR leaders. The strife and division within the CLAR leadership lasts until the 1991 General Assembly when a new Secretary General and President are chosen.⁴¹

Another casualty of the intervention is Sister Hermengarda Martins. After nine years of service to CLAR, Sister Martins' provincial is told to relocate her back to Brazil. The reason for this, according to President Coscia, is that "some people with much responsibility" want her far from the headquarters of CLAR.⁴²

Later interventions

The intervention by the Vatican does not end with the appointment of Jorge Jiménez. In a January 23, 1991 letter CRIS imposes new restrictions upon CLAR. The

38 L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia [XXIV Junta Directiva, Lima, Peru]," p. 6-7.

39 L. Coscia (carta 12 de octubre de 1989) [presidents of the national conferences of religious in Latin America], p. 2; ("...el Organismo CLAR ha sido muerto en plena vitalidad"). L. Coscia, Informe de la presidencia [XXIV Junta Directiva, Lima, Peru]," p. 11-12. Some religious protest that this is too strongly worded. President Coscia explains that he was only referring to the life of the institutional CLAR.

40 CLAR, "Actas," in *CLAR XXIV Junta Directiva. Lima, Perú, 14-22 de marzo de 1990* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1990): 175-183. B. Blanco, "Informe de presidencia. XXV Junta Directiva [Costa Rica]," *Boletín CLAR* 30:5-6 (mayo-junio 1992): 9.

41 CLAR, "Documento 7," in *CLAR XXIV Junta Directiva. Lima, Perú 14-22 de marzo de 1990* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1990): 174-184, 209-212. Secretary Jiménez's report is rejected by the CLAR General Board who see it as inflammatory. The General Board offers Jiménez the opportunity to re-write his report which he refuses to do. The result is that there is no official report from the Secretary General for this General Board Meeting. After his term of office ends in 1991, Jorge Jiménez is appointed bishop of Zipaquirá (Colombia) on November 8, 1992 (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. 84 II [1992]: 1193) and is later elected Secretary General of CELAM.

42 L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia [XXIV Junta Directiva, Lima, Peru]," p. 11.

most radical restriction is the suspension of the CLAR Statutes for its 1991 General Assembly. According to new regulations, the General Assembly (February 1991) is deprived of the right to elect CLAR officers and permitted to only submit a list of nominees for the five offices. CRIS is given the task and responsibility to make the final selection. The CLAR leadership is further told that its Work Document for the 1991 General Assembly, "Actual Tendencies of the Religious Life in Latin America", has been rejected and "will have to be revised and completed in the light of numerous documents of the Pontifical Magisterium."⁴³

CLAR's ability to make theological reflections is also further restricted with a requirement that each member of the CLAR theological team must be approved by their episcopal conferences. Added to this is the requirement that any CLAR document now has to receive the *imprimatur* of the local bishop and a Pontifical delegate before publication.⁴⁴ Finally, this January 23 letter tells CLAR that a Pontifical Delegate will be appointed to oversee CLAR.

On February 5, 1991 Bishop Héctor Julio López Hurtado, SDB (Ariari, Colombia) is officially appointed as the Pontifical Delegate for CLAR. He is given broad powers. Not only must he attend all meetings, enforce CLAR Statutes, and approve any publication but the CLAR leadership can make no decision without his approval.⁴⁵

The 1991 CLAR General Assembly, complying with CRIS' demands, submits a list of nominees for the five CLAR offices. This list is not published but apparently the delegates make their preferences quite clear.⁴⁶ When the CRIS chooses the CLAR leadership not all those preferences are honored.⁴⁷

43 J. Hamer (carta 23 de enero de 1991) [President Blanco], *SEDOC*, vol 24 (julho-agosto 1991): 54. Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Tendencias actuales de la vida religiosa en América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 29:1 (enero 1991): 3-22.

44 J. Hamer (carta 23 de enero de 1991) [President Blanco], p. 54.

45 J. Hamer, "Nomeação do delegado apostólico. Decreto," *SEDOC* (julho-agosto 1991): 59-60. Some of these restrictions are the enforcement of provisions of the Statutes which CLAR had not previously observed, including prior episcopal approval for CLAR theologians (art. 29,4) and the approval by the local bishop for CLAR publications of a "religious and doctrinal nature" (art. 6).

46 J. Van Nieuwenhove, "XIe algemene vergadering van CLAR, Mexico, 19-28 februari 1991," report for Advieskommissie Missionaire Aktiviteiten (AMA), 9 maart 1991 (Oestgeest, Netherlands: 1991): 13, mimeo. Van Nieuwenhove is an observer at the General Assembly and notes that of the 18 names on the list of candidates 4 would have been automatically elected if the Statutes had been followed (i.e. they received either 2/3 of the votes [as required for the president] or a majority [for the other 4 offices]).

47 CLAR, "Mensaje de la Junta Directiva extraordinaria de la CLAR a todos los religiosos y religiosas de América Latina [II Junta Directiva Extraordinaria, Fusagasugá, Colombia]," *Boletín CLAR* 29:8 (agosto 1991): 2. This Second Extraordinary General Board Meeting is called to discuss CRIS' only partial acceptance of the General Assembly's nominees.

The CLAR leadership attempts to rejuvenate the organization. A new General Plan for 1991-1994 is formulated.⁴⁸ There are also attempts to once more begin the CLAR seminars and form a new CLAR team of theologians (now designated as 'theological assessors'). Help is received from the Pontifical Delegate Bishop Hurtado who receives praise for improving relations between CLAR and the hierarchy.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, CLAR's freedom is limited and remains so until 1994 when the CLAR General Assembly is once again able to elect its leadership and the Pontifical Delegate is removed.⁵⁰

12.3 Reasons for the intervention

Explanations for the Vatican intervention are given by Cardinal Hamer of the Congregation for Religious as well as from the perspective of the CLAR leadership. The difference in how this action is interpreted by the principal parties is dramatic.

Official reasons for the intervention

Cardinal Jerome Hamer in a letter of September 29, 1989 offers the official reasons for CRIS' appointment of Jiménez as CLAR Secretary General. This appointment, according to the cardinal, does not signify a lack of confidence in CLAR. Instead, the appointment should be seen as a way in which CRIS wishes to help CLAR in three important ways:

- a to give CLAR "better doctrinal and theological qualification to the secretary generalate";
- b as a way to improve relations with CELAM; and
- c to help resolve problems with the project *Palabra-Vida*.⁵¹

From Cardinal Hamer's explanation, the intervention revolves not solely around administrative issues, concerning the CLAR secretary general's office. Instead, conflicts over doctrinal and theological issues are also evident between CLAR and the Magisterium.⁵² Areas of tension between magisterial positions and CLAR are

48 CLAR, "Plan Global A. Lineas inspiradoras (1991-1994)," *Boletín CLAR* 29:8 (agosto 1991): 5-23.

49 B. Blanco, "Informe de presidencia. XXV Junta Directiva [Costa Rica]," p. 6-9.

50 E. Somalo [carta 23 de febrero de 1994] [President Blanco], *Boletín CLAR* 32:3 (marzo 1994): 4.

51 J. Hamer (carta 29 de septiembre de 1989) [President Coscia], *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989): 1.

52 Cf. p. 261-262. Aside from Cardinal Hamer's concerns, it is worth remembering that the CLAR leadership on its trip to Rome after the intervention met with Cardinal Ratzinger as well as Cardinal Hamer from CRIS. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12 (Washington D.C: Catholic University of America, 1967), s.v. "Teaching Authority of the Church," by J.R. Leach. (Eds., J. Kononchak, M. Collins, and D. Lane, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, (Dublin: Gill and Mac Millan, 1987), s.v. "Magisterium," by F.A. Sullivan. This study considers the intervention to be a 'magisterial intervention' and more than an administrative

also apparent in Pope John Paul II's 1990 letter to Latin American religious. The Pope expresses concern about the: option for the poor, the centrality of the vows in the theology of religious life, a proper understanding of liberation, that religious not become a parallel magisterium, that their evangelization is under the direction of the local bishop, and the danger which ideology as well as certain sociological categories poses to religious life.⁵³

CLAR's perspective on the intervention

The CLAR leadership has its own perspective on the reasons for the initial Vatican intervention. For the First Extraordinary General Board Meeting in Quito (1989) and President Coscia the reason for the intervention is CLAR's fidelity to the option for the poor. Other tensions are named as contributing to the Vatican intervention:

- CELAM's fear of a 'parallel church';
- CLAR's advocacy of a different form of religious life and evangelization;
- *Palabra-Vida*;
- Different ecclesiologies by CELAM and CLAR;
- CLAR's support for the *comunidades insertas*;
- CELAM's distrust of CLAR.⁵⁴

action against CLAR's leadership Beneath the surface of the action lie concerns which touch on theological and doctrinal issues. However, it must be recognized that the term 'magisterium' as well as its extent of competency are subjects over which theologians disagree. While there is consensus that the Magisterium has authority to protect and clarify revelation, related issues ('secondary objects') of jurisdiction are a point of contention. Cardinal B Hume, "Première congrégation générale (conclusion), rapport avant discussion," *Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin*, 3 de octubre de 1994, French edition, p. 3-4, 9-10. Another level of this issue, although by no means irrelevant, surfaced during the 1994 Synod of Bishops. Cardinal Hume raises issues and questions which surrounds the autonomy and dependence of religious life in relation to the hierarchy and the Magisterium.

53 John Paul II, "Carta apostólica de su santidad Juan Pablo II a los religiosos y religiosas de América Latina," *Boletín CLAR* 28.8 (agosto 1990): 3-27.

54 CLAR, Junta Directiva extraordinaria de la CLAR, (carta 9 de septiembre de 1989) [Cardinal J. Hamer] *Boletín CLAR*, número especial (octubre 1989) 1-7. L. Coscia, "Informe de la presidencia [XXIV Junta Directiva, Lima, Peru]," p. 9, 12.

13 Analysis of CLAR's contextual theology in the light of the magisterial interpretation of the Second Vatican Council

13.0 Introduction

Chapter 12 reviewed the initial Vatican intervention and subsequent actions by the Magisterium which increasingly restricted CLAR's ability to govern itself and publish studies. The chapter further identified what CRIS and CLAR saw as the reasons for the intervention. Although their perspectives differ, common points of friction are seen as underlying the action by the Vatican: the interpretation of the option for the poor, the relationship between religious and the hierarchy, the evangelization of religious, identity in religious life, and different ecclesiologies.

While the parties directly involved list specific issues as provoking the intervention, some theologians have a different view. They see the Vatican intervention as part of a broader context of friction within the Church. For Giulio Girardi, this broader context is dominated by the clash between the Magisterium and the theology of liberation. CLAR's support of liberation theology and attempts to formulate a new liberating form of evangelization, education, and religious life are, for Girardi, the reasons for the Vatican intervention.⁵⁵

Former CLAR Vice President Israel Nery also sees the intervention by the Vatican in a broader context. But, for Nery, this context is filled with questions, which the Second Vatican Council left unaddressed, that are a source of friction for the entire Church. After the Second Vatican Council the Church sought a new relationship with society. Yet one question left unaddressed was how to analyze and more fully understand the working of society. CLAR chose to focus on oppression in the Latin American reality and use the option for the poor. Nery also points to a questioning of identity within the Church and religious life in the aftermath of Vatican II. CLAR's choice was to link identity with insertion in the world of the poor, fashioning new models of Church and religious life. As a result of CLAR's

55 G. Girardi, *El templo condena el Evangelio. El conflicto sobre la teología de la liberación entre el Vaticano y la CLAR* (Madrid: Editorial Nueva Utopía, 1994): 1-86, esp. 71-86. For Girardi, the important sources of tension between CLAR and the Vatican are: *Palabra-Vida*, the use of *comunidades insertas* as formation houses, the interpretation of the Fifth Centenary celebration, the evangelization of religious, and the interpretation of the option for the poor.

choices conflict resulted with the Magisterium, who offered different answers to these questions from the Second Vatican Council.⁵⁶

Chapter 13 expands on Brother Nery's views and shows that the intervention can be seen as flowing from different interpretations by the Magisterium and CLAR on certain issues from the Second Vatican Council. It is the contention of this study that CLAR made choices which it saw as faithful to the Council and relevant to a Latin American context of oppression and violence. The result of these choices is a contextual theology of religious life which can be analyzed in relation to general traits for a contextual theology mentioned in the Introduction. Thus Chapter 13 is also a conclusion to this study, using the conflict with the Vatican as a backdrop against which CLAR can be seen to have developed a contextual theology which: uses social analysis, has a specific hermeneutic, has a community as the subject of theologizing, is relevant, liberative, and relates to global issues.

This approach has an advantage in treating the principal tensions from the Vatican's intervention in relation to the broader context of CLAR's reflections from after 1966. This study analyzes the issues mentioned by the CLAR leadership as causes for the Vatican Intervention but is not restricted to them. For even underlying these acknowledged points of dispute (e.g. the option for the poor) lie other differences which divide CLAR from the magisterial interpretation of Vatican II. Yet there is an accompanying disadvantage, namely that certain issues which were not a source of controversy between CLAR and the hierarchy (e.g. the spirituality of insertion, Christology, experience of God) are treated only in relation to other issues.

Chapter 13 follows a three step methodology. First, there is a brief summary of texts from the Second Vatican Council. This points to the concern by the Council for a specific issue. Second, CLAR position is shown as flowing from a certain view of the Second Vatican Council which it sees as relevant to the Latin American context and liberative for religious. Next there is a short review of the developing magisterial interpretation.⁵⁷ The intent of this review is not to provide a

56 I J Nery, "CLAR. A vida religiosa e os desafios de uma crise," p 83-85

57 The principal ecclesial documents used in this comparison flow from the Pope's own recommendation John Paul II, "Carta apostólica de su santidad Juan Pablo II a los religiosos y religiosas de América Latina," p. 12-15, 19-21. In this 1990 letter, the Pope tells Latin American religious to refer to magisterial documents. Specifically named are *Lumen Gentium*, *Perfectae Caritatis*, *Evangelica Testificatio*, *Redemptionis Donum*, and the 1990 CRIS document, *Directions on Formation in Religious Institutes*. In his letter the Pope also cites from *Liberatis Nuntius*, *Mutuae Relationes*, *Christus Dominus*, *Christifideles Laici* and *Libertatis Consciencia*. Jacques Van Nieuwenhove, "CLAR' Beleid 1991-1994," report for Advieskommissie Missionaire Aktiviteiten (AMA) (Oestgeest, Netherlands, 1994), mimeo. Van Nieuwenhove mentions that during the VI Inter-American meeting of religious (1994) the CRIS document *Fraternal Life in Community* (*Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor*) is presented by CRIS. Therefore this study considers the last mentioned document to also be of special importance.

comprehensive picture of the Magisterium's post-conciliar teachings, but instead to show how magisterial interpretations on certain issues evolve in a direction distinct from CLAR. Then a few words are said in order to highlight the contrast between CLAR and the magisterial interpretations. Third and finally, this study comments on the relevance and liberative possibility of CLAR's position. In several cases, this study believes that CLAR produces insights into the religious life which are relevant beyond the context of Latin America.

13.1 Social sciences and the Latin American context

For CLAR sociology, praxis, social location and a recognition of the power of the dominant ideology are the necessary cornerstones of any analysis of Latin American social reality. CLAR views its positions on these issues as flowing from the Second Vatican Council, which asked the Church to fashion a new relationship with 'the world'. Yet in a short review of magisterial documents the power of the dominant ideology is not seen as a principal barrier to the analysis of society. Instead there is concern that a reliance on social analysis, praxis and social location, could lead to an uncritical acceptance of Marxism with serious consequences on Christian faith.

13.1.1 Vatican II, openness to society and discernment of the signs of the times

The Second Vatican Council sought to fashion a new relationship between the Church and human societies, the world of human life and action. In order to do this, the Council left behind a previous self-understanding of the Church as a 'perfect society', isolated from 'the world'. Instead, the Council states that the Church has a relationship of Servant to humanity and needs to share the hopes and concerns of humanity.⁵⁸

The Council Fathers do not describe the Church's relationship with specific societies, this would clearly be beyond its scope. Nonetheless, there is a clear vision of how the Council views the modern world. According to the Council, the modern world is seen as a place with vast possibilities for the betterment of all peoples. Advances in science and technology offer the possibility for major improvements in the lives of millions. Likewise, modern mass media and economic systems are depicted as factors which are weaving humanity even closer in bonds of interdependency.⁵⁹ Yet within this optimistic picture, the Council also lists some tensions, most of which confronted the West European and North American churches.⁶⁰

The Council views its relationship with human societies and ongoing human history as filled with theological importance. God's presence and Will is, for the

58 *GS* 1; 3-4; 21; 40-43.

59 See *GS* 23-26; 54-56; 63-65; 84-85.

60 *GS* 4-10; 20-21; 47; 63-66; 77-82.

Council, discernable in the *signs of the times* which are present in social movements and history. The discernment of these *signs of the times* is important for they reveal how God wishes the Church to change and respond to an ever changing history.⁶¹

Yet the *signs of the times*, while important for the Church's life and mission, are not easily detectable. One reason is that the world and human societies have a degree of autonomy which requires interpretation using its own laws (*gs* 36). The Council accepts this and sees that sciences can help the Church. Through the social sciences the Church can listen and interpret "contemporary utterances" of humanity, make the Gospel understandable and assist the ongoing development of its own social structure (*gs* 44).

Social analysis or social doctrine?

CLAR, accepting the Council's positive view of the human sciences, advocated the use of social analysis for the discernment of the *signs of the times* in the concrete reality of Latin America. Social analysis permitted religious to clearly view the hidden social structures which produce poverty and determine how religious life, evangelization and identity were intertwined with these. For CLAR, in order to forge a new relation with society, as the Council asked, it was first of all necessary to have a precise vision of Latin America.

CLAR used the dependency perspective to view the interactions of Latin American society, the *signs of the times* and how religious life identity and evangelization had supported unjust social structures. In addition to the dependency perspective, CLAR also accepted certain elements from the thought of Anton Gramsci and was open to Marxist social analysis.

The choice of dependency was for CLAR both relevant to the Latin American context as well as liberating for religious. From the dependency perspective, social analysis could focus on the international and internal social structures which produce the massive poverty in Latin American societies. Also through dependency, religious could learn how their life, identity and evangelization supported, albeit unintentionally, the maintenance of these unjust social structures.⁶²

In the evolution of the magisterial thinking in the post conciliar period there is a growing wariness about the use of sociology. *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) still sees the sciences in a positive – though somewhat guarded – light. The sciences are described as offering only partial and incomplete picture of human existence, but "can widen the horizons of human liberty to a greater extent than the conditioning circumstances perceived enable one to foresee." Thus the "sciences are a condition at once indispensable and inadequate for a better discovery of what is

61 *gs* 4; 11; 44; *po* 9; *aa* 14. J. Fichtner, "Signs, Charisms, Apostolates," *Review for Religious*, vol. 27 (1968): 767-768. Fichtner says that the term *signs of the times* is first used by Pope John XXIII in *Humanae Salutis* and later in *Pacem et Terris*.

62 Cf. p. 89-90, 96-97, 210-214, 229-230.

human" (OA 40). A contrast to this view appears in the 1990 CRIS *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* which states that, "A religious should be aware of learning, not many sciences, but only one: the science of faith and the Gospel" (61). Suspicion arises that the use of sociology for internal ecclesial analysis could lead to equating the Church with other social institutions, forgetting its transcendental dimension.⁶³

There is furthermore strong opposition to any use of Marxist social analysis, most clearly seen in *Liberatis Nuntius*.⁶⁴ Instead of the use of sociology, the Church's social doctrine is viewed as the instrument which can guide analysis of social reality and action for change.⁶⁵ In the 1987 encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, a clear distinction is made between social analysis and an analysis from the perspective of the Church's social doctrine. While a social analysis searches for the social roots of injustice, the social doctrine identifies the moral causes of social injustice, nationally and internationally (SRS 35-36). "Its main aim is to *interpret* these realities....and to *guide* Christian behavior" (SRS 41). The role of the human sciences is practical and technical, namely the concrete application in a context of moral decisions made in light of the social doctrine (SRS 35).

In contrast, the Magisterium was reacting to what it perceived as threats either to doctrinal orthodoxy (use of Marxist social analysis) or to ecclesial structures. Social analysis is not viewed as necessary since it is seen possible to identify the moral causes of social injustice without it. Finally, the use of social analysis to critically evaluate ecclesial or religious relationship to a society is not viewed as necessary.

Ideology as a threat

CLAR also used the social sciences to obtain a critical perspective towards ideologies and was principally concerned with the dominant ideology, unconsciously accepted by religious through normal socialization. This dominant ideology was seen as a relevant problem which had to be addressed for a clear view of Latin American society and in order to liberate religious life. Through acceptance of the dominant ideology, religious were unable to adopt a critical stance in relation to the society, preventing the discernment of the *signs of the times* and the underlying social structures. The dominant ideology was also a threat to religious life manipulating the image of God, internal religious life

63 A concern about a strictly sociological view of the Church is clear in the 1985 Synod of Bishops, "Synod Report" (II,3; IIC), MR 1; RH 21; CL 19; LN X,15; *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 24.

64 LN VII; OA 34; and Puebla 91; 544-545. It is ironical that Pope John Paul II is influenced by some Marxian concepts: LE 11 (the conflict between labor and capital), CA 40-41 (alienation as Christian concept); and OA 16-20 (unjust international structures which tend to be imperialistic in relationships to poorer nations).

65 OA 4; Puebla 472-479; LN V; LC 68; chapter V; 72-74; CA 26.

structures and evangelization so that these legitimate (and even reproduce) the existing social *status quo*.⁶⁶

Ideology is not a frequent topic in magisterial documents. Nonetheless when discussed, it is viewed in negative terms, as a clear threat to Christian life, which propagates understandings that contradict the Gospel teachings. While comments about the danger of the liberal-capitalist ideology appear, apprehension by the Magisterium is largely centered upon the appeal of Marxism.⁶⁷

CLAR's principal concern was with the dominant ideology, which posed a threat to religious life and blocked a clear analysis of Latin American society. Contrasted to this, is the Magisterium whose preoccupation is with the conscious acceptance of Marxist ideology, which is judged as a major threat to religious identity.

Importance of the social locus

The social location of religious was seen as a relevant factor which influenced the ability of religious to clearly discern the socio-political reality. Among the poor, CLAR maintained that religious could obtain a view of Latin American society which was different and less likely to be distorted by the dominant ideology. Social location also led to different understandings of the Gospel, God and religious life. Among the poor, CLAR contended that religious could obtain new understandings which could liberate them from former inadequate theologies and the grip of the dominant ideology.⁶⁸

There is in magisterial documents neither concern for the importance of social location as a place for social analysis nor its role in liberating religious life. Nonetheless, two related concerns appear in several documents: a realization that the poor have a deep faith which can enrich religious, accompanied by a fear of theology which is grounded on partisan or class-based interpretations.⁶⁹

66 Cf. p 91, 210-214, 218-219

67 OA 26-29, 32-36, (section 31 deals with socialism, 32-34 on Marxism while only section 35 treats the liberal ideology). RHP 10b, Puebla 47; 437, 542, (on the liberal ideology) Puebla 48, 437; 543-545, (on Marxism). Puebla 49, 547-549, (on the National Security doctrine). Similarly EN 58 warns base communities about the danger from "fashionable ideologies". SRS 36, (the East and West blocs are seen as having "rigid ideologies") and SRS 41, (the interpretation of reality is seen as belonging to moral theology not ideology) LN II John Paul II, "Carta apostólica de su santidad Juan Pablo a los religiosos y religiosas de América Latina," #13; 20.

68 Cf p 94-95, 216-217

69 CRIS, *Fraternal Life in Community*, 63 LC 22, ("Here we have a fact of fundamental theological and pastoral significance it is the poor, the object of God's special love who understand best and as it were instinctively that the most radical liberation [is-jk] accomplished by the Death and Resurrection of Christ") LN VIII, 4,X.

The contrast between the Magisterium and CLAR lies in the latter's acceptance of the social location of the poor as important both in the analysis of society as well as in the furtherance of religious life renewal.

Praxis as a means of discovering the social reality

CLAR further found in praxis a means for religious to discover the Latin American social reality. The relevancy and liberating quality of praxis was that religious could discover and change their sociological and theological assumptions through reflection on their practice.⁷⁰

For the Magisterium concerns surfaced about the relationship between praxis and theology in the 1984 Instruction on liberation theology. There praxis is rejected when viewed as:

- 1 the sole criterion for the truth;
- 2 replacing orthodoxy; and
- 3 linked to Marxist class struggle.⁷¹

CLAR saw praxis as aiding social analysis by requiring religious to engage in ongoing critical reflection in order to develop more liberating forms of action. The magisterial concern is doctrinal, fearing that Marxist revolutionary praxis would be accepted.

13.1.2 Relevant and liberating?

Through social analysis, praxis, attention to the dominant ideology and social location, CLAR claimed it could obtain a clear vision of Latin America. Can these be seen as relevant to the Latin American context in which CLAR found itself? It is this study's position that CLAR's choices were relevant, although not without serious consequences.

The relevancy of CLAR's positions can first of all be seen as a concrete attempt to take seriously the Latin American reality. The problem of poverty and oppression were viewed a key challenges facing religious life and the Church. The choice of dependency offered a framework from which poverty and oppression were seen as created by socio-political structures. In this way, CLAR's position directed religious to accept responsibility and focus on ways to change these structures. CLAR's choice also offered an important heuristic framework in which several elements are central. The concept of dominant ideology offered an important tool to explain the resistance, social and ecclesial, to any social change. The term 'praxis' provided religious a new way of reflection which integrally bound their

⁷⁰ Cf. p. 93-94.

⁷¹ *LN X*; 3, *VIII*, 2. John Paul II, "Carta apostólica de su santidad Juan Pablo a los religiosos y religiosas de América Latina," #20. The Pope says that a Marxist interpretation of the option for the poor "has led to a false concept [of evangelical poverty-jk] and an anomalous praxis"; ("ha llevado a un falso concepto y a una praxis anómala...").

action with its sociological and theological assumptions. Finally, CLAR's utilization of the concept 'social location' led to a self-questioning about the relationship between social class and religious life's public witness.

CLAR's focus on social analysis and openness to Marxist thought also can be seen as serious attempts to address the Latin America context. According to McGovern, Marxism was accepted by most intellectuals and was the basis of many popular movements in the 1960s and 1970s. He says:

"Liberation theologians could justifiably argue that any movement to bring about change in Latin America almost inevitably took on some Marxist ideas and language."⁷²

In this light, the magisterial concern about Marxism is seen in a different light. CLAR, wrestling with a concrete reality in which Marxism was a *lingua franca*, adopted certain Marxian terms (i.e. praxis, social location, dominant ideology) and an openness to Marxist social analysis. Yet CLAR did not accept the traditional Marxist understandings for these terms nor that it was essential to join social analysis with Marxist philosophy.

The relevancy of CLAR's use of social analysis also can be seen as a recognition of the experience of religious. Religious discovered that the poor have another vision of reality and God. In their praxis with the poor, religious similarly learned that many of their previously held views about society were not just incorrect but distortions.

Yet while CLAR's choices about social analysis are relevant to the context, a consequence was that its vision of Latin American society was limited in three areas.

After 1974, CLAR paid only scant attention to the process of secularization, which it had judged as affecting only the upper classes. Unfortunately, the influence of secularization (or modernity/post-modernity) has not ceased but continues its penetration of Latin America, affecting all social groups, including the poor. Similarly, the woman's issue was viewed as a part of the general socio-economic oppression of Latin America and not a more deep-rooted cultural phenomenon. Finally, CLAR's adoption of Gramsci had consequences in its understanding of culture. While not deterministic, CLAR saw socio-economics as a key to understanding culture and ascribed cultural diversity to economic position in a society.⁷³

This study also agrees that CLAR's use of social analysis can be liberating for religious life in several ways. First, CLAR was unwilling to conceive of religious

72 A. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and its Critics* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989): 158-159.

73 Cf. p. 242-243.

life in abstract terms and in so doing freed religious to receive a clearer picture of themselves. Through the use of sociology, the words of religious could be scientifically compared to actual practices. When this is done, the rhetoric of religious life melts away, often revealing a picture quite different from religious' perceptions. Second, CLAR's use of social analysis shows that religious, like everyone else, are in need of liberation. In the face of dominant ideologies, religious are as enslaved as others to acceptance of a social reality in which oppression is viewed with indifference or a rationalization. Finally, CLAR allowed religious to see that this freedom from dominant ideologies is inseparable from the process of renewal. Otherwise, in the renewal of internal structures and evangelization religious would imitate social structures which further could dilute their life and public witness of religious life.

13.2 Hermeneutic of the option for the poor

CLAR's adopted the option for the poor as an hermeneutical starting point. Through the option, religious used the poor's perspective in order to theologically evaluate the Latin American socio-political reality as well as their own religious life and praxis. The importance of the option rested upon an understanding that the Kingdom can be seen as historically present among the poor and that the poor can read the Bible in a new manner, liberating it from past understandings and forging a clear relationship with a social reality of oppression. Nonetheless, the magisterial documents have different interpretations of the Kingdom's historical presence, the option for the poor as a criterion for religious, and the poor's reading of the Bible.⁷⁴

13.2.1 Vatican II: Attention for the poor, the Kingdom and the Bible

At the Second Vatican Council there was much attention given to the poor. In a famous speech Cardinal Lercaro stated that the Church should become a Church of the poor. Additionally, Archbishop Hakim circulated a document by Paul Gauthier on the poor and Christ. This attention for the poor, while not given a comprehensive treatment, is nonetheless evident in various conciliar documents.⁷⁵ In these documents two principal images of the poor emerge. The first is that the poor are a group who demand the charity and assistance of the entire Church. A second links the poor to the earthly ministry of Jesus. Just as He preached the Good News first to the poor, so must the Church as a sign of her fidelity to Christ's mission.⁷⁶

74 Cf. p. 55-56. The historical presence of the Kingdom among the poor is discussed first since, as the study shows, it arose in CLAR discussions before the option for the poor.

75 J.L. Illanes, "La opción preferencial por los pobres," *Tierra Nueva*, vol. 246 (julio 1987): 11-22. *LG* 41. *GS* 1; 4; 31; 69; 81.

76 Among others: *LG* 8; *AG* 12.

In addition to attention for the poor, the Second Vatican Council touched on the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom. For the Council Fathers, the Church is a sign and instrument of the Kingdom,⁷⁷ which is partially present in human history. This historical presence of the Kingdom is not restricted to the institutional Catholic Church as "many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible structure" (LG 8).⁷⁸ While the Kingdom can be present beyond the Church's institution, the Council distinguishes between the Kingdom and human progress. The Kingdom's advancement cannot be seen as synonymous with human progress, although human advancement "is very much in the interest of the Kingdom of God" (GS 39).

Finally, the Second Vatican Council saw the need for Catholics to study and use the Bible. The Council supports access and daily reading of the Bible (especially for religious).⁷⁹ In its study and use, the Council says that the Bible should be interpreted in the light of literary and historical critical considerations, the author's original intent, the unity of the Bible and fidelity to tradition. The Magisterium is described as responsible for the preservation of the tradition and protection against false interpretations.⁸⁰

Kingdom's presence among the poor?

CLAR took seriously the Council's words that historical presence of the Kingdom is not restricted to the institutional Church and identified this presence among the poor. This served as an important hermeneutical guide for CLAR's theological interpretation of the Latin American reality and the renewal of religious life.

For CLAR, this presence of the Kingdom was evident among the poor in the actions of the *CEBS* and the popular organizations, striving for liberation and the construction of new social relationships which flow from Christian values.⁸¹

This focus on the Kingdom among the poor was also seen as relevant and liberating. The relevancy of this viewpoint was that it drew a clear relationship between the expansion of the Kingdom, which all Christians must assist, and the liberation of the poor. Its liberative value laid in the fact that among the poor values were discovered, central for the Kingdom, which could further the process of religious life renewal.

There is little direct comment by the magisterial documents on the presence of the Kingdom among the poor. Nonetheless, the 1984 Instruction on Liberation Theology rejects "a tendency to identify the Kingdom of God and its growth with the human liberation movement" because in so doing theology and Christian faith

77 LG 1; 8; VII. GS 45.

78 Commonly cited as showing this is: GS 39. LG 8; 13-16.

79 DV 22; 25.

80 DV 7-12; 23.

81 Cf. p. 99-100, 239.

become reduced to political meanings, devoid of transcendental reference. Such a reductionism, for the Instruction is seen as opposed to the Council's teaching.⁸² Likewise there is growing stress in magisterial documents that the Church is where the historical presence of the Kingdom can be seen. An example appears in *Redemptoris Missio* where the Pope says that the Kingdom and the Church are 'indissolubly linked' (RM 17-19).⁸³

While CLAR focussed on the historical presence of the Kingdom among the poor, magisterial documents are wary about any attempt to situate the Kingdom's historical presence outside of the institutional Church.

Option for the poor as criterion for religious life: Particularity to build communion or a sign of the Church's universal mission?

CLAR saw the option for the poor as a concrete expression of the Council's concern for the poor in Latin America, making their liberation a focal point. CLAR adopted the option for the poor as the hermeneutical perspective for the evaluation of religious internal life, evangelization and the Church. The choice of the option as an hermeneutical perspective was viewed as relevant contextually. In a socio-political reality of Latin America, enmeshed in conflict between social classes, neutrality was viewed as impossible. The option allowed religious to make a clear choice for the poor, in order to construct a new social order with communion between social classes.

The option for the poor was furthermore viewed as holding a liberating potential for religious life. Through fidelity to the option, religious were challenged to leave forms of life and evangelization which alienated them from the Latin American people and insert themselves more fully into the life and struggles of the poor.⁸⁴

In the magisterial documents there appears a gradual reception of the option for poor. First of all, the option is seen as a modern expression for the Church's tradition of charity for the poor. Additionally, it is viewed as a sign that the Church is striving to continue the mission of Jesus, bringing the Gospel to everyone. The option calls religious to conversion in their lifestyle and use of material goods. They are further asked to denounce injustice, be a voice defending the poor's rights and work to advance their human development.⁸⁵

82 *LN IX*, 3-7; 10. International Theological Commission, "Human Development and Christian Salvation," in *International Theological Commission: Texts and Documents 1969-1985* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989): 145-161, esp. 155-161. *LC 60* and *LE 27* have similar concerns about identifying human development with the Kingdom.

83 John Paul II, "Carta apostólica de su santidad Juan Pablo a los religiosos y religiosas de América Latina," #24. Service to the Kingdom is seen as the advancement of the Pope's New Evangelization project.

84 Cf. p. 134-135, 208-210, 216-217.

85 *RHP 4*, 17-18.

However, for the Magisterium the option for the poor can be misinterpreted in several ways. The option for the poor should not be seen as exclusive of anyone.⁸⁶ Nor are the poor understood only in socio-economic categories but also include other social groups who are seen as needing the Church's attention and charity. Furthermore, the option is seen as improperly interpreted if it leads to division with the hierarchy.⁸⁷ While the option includes action for social justice, it should not lead religious to partisan political party activity.⁸⁸ Finally, for religious the option for the poor needs to be implemented in accord with the foundational charisms of religious congregations.⁸⁹

CLAR understood the option for the poor as a clear choice for the poor in a reality of class conflict. Focussing on the poor and their liberation was viewed as a way to build communion in the context of Latin America. The magisterial documents provide a clear contrast. The option is seen as part of the Church's universal non-exclusive mission to all people. The poor are not viewed solely in socio-economic terms but as those who are in need of the Church's charity and special attention. Because of this, any attempt to understand the option as favoring a social class is seen not as a way to build communion but rather as sowing divisiveness within the Church.

Bible as the Book of life

CLAR heard the Council's call for increased attention by Catholics to the Bible. But for CLAR, this led to reading the Bible in relation to the Latin American reality of oppression and the experience of religious in the *comunidades insertas*.

CLAR read the Bible as a Book of life in a dialectical relationship with the social reality of injustice. The Bible was seen as revealing new perspectives which permitted a clearer theological judgement of the oppressive social reality. According to CLAR this method of Bible reading was contextually relevant and flowed from the practice of the *CEBS* which tried to link theological insights with action for liberation. This manner of reading the Bible was seen as faithful to the practice of the early Church.⁹⁰

86 LC 68. 1985 Synod Final Report II, D 6. SRS 42-43. John Paul II, homily (October 11, 1984), *Boletín CLAR* (diciembre 1984): 13; ("sin que esa opción signifique ver al pobre como una clase, como una clase en lucha, o como Iglesia separada de la comunión y obediencia a los Pastores puestos por Cristo"). CRIS, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 14. RM 60; (which cites *Puebla* 1142). *Puebla*, of course, also stresses that the option for the poor is not exclusive: *Puebla* 1134-1165; 382; 735; 769.

87 LN IX,9; SRS 42. The Pope classifies the following as the poor: sick, unemployed, those without medical care, those without hope. CRIS, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 14.

88 John Paul II, "Carta apostólica de su santidad Juan Pablo II a los religiosos y religiosas de América Latina," #20.

89 RHP 4c.

90 Cf. p. 136-137, 254.

Flowing from the experience of the inserted religious, committed to solidarity and aiding the poor's liberation, the Bible was read as yielding new understandings for God, the image of Jesus and the spirituality of religious life.

Among the poor, God was experienced as present and offering hope for liberation in the face of oppression and suffering. S/He was seen as having a preference for the poor which was evident in the Old Testament as well as in the life and actions of Jesus.⁹¹

Based upon experience with the poor, religious also interpreted biblical image of Jesus differently. While there appeared a variety of images (liberator, evangelizer, prophet and Suffering Servant), common elements appeared. Jesus was seen in the Bible as: having chosen to be poor, had opted for the poor, created new relationships, displayed a freedom in relation to socio-religious structures, focussed His life and action on the Kingdom, and was unafraid of conflict.⁹²

Finally, the *comunidades insertas* through daily experience and Bible readings with the poor formulate a new spirituality of religious life. This spirituality sought to ground religious life in the culture and spirituality of the poor as well as offer a clear alternative to former spiritualities of religious life. Thus for inserted religious, a spirituality of insertion slowly emerged which was: trinitarian, sought the restoration of humanity, recognized the historicity of religious life/praxis, saw the poor as the mediators for religious life, had an eschatological focus, a biblical stress, saw asceticism in daily life among the poor, and accepted conflict.⁹³

Within the magisterial documents, there is an acknowledgement that religious can be evangelized and obtain spiritual insights as a result of life among the poor.⁹⁴ Yet this is not a major concern or focus of attention. Instead the spotlight was placed upon CLAR's program of Bible readings, which was attacked as ideological and ignoring Church Tradition. The use of the Bible as a hermeneutic to judge reality was seen as needing the historical critical methodology, the Tradition of interpretation, the centrality of Christ and magisterial teachings.⁹⁵

There is no controversy surrounding CLAR's attempt to use the experience of inserted religious as a source for new interpretations from the Bible. Instead the contrast between CLAR and the Magisterium lies in CLAR's reading the Bible with a dialectical relationship to the Latin American social reality. While CLAR claims

91 Cf. p. 108-110, 237.

92 Cf. p. 108-110, 221.

93 Cf. p. 236-241.

94 One example: CRIS, *Fraternal Life in Community* 63.

95 A reaffirmation of *ov* 25 that religious should read the Bible appears in CRIS, *The Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life* #II,B,8. *The Final Report* II,B,1. The 1985 Synod of Bishops states that the Bible's original meaning (mentioned in *ov* 12) is inseparable from the magisterial interpretation of it.

this reading was faithful to the early Church's practice, the Magisterium saw it as ideological and contrary to the Tradition.

13.2.2 Relevant and liberating?

CLAR's adoption of the option for the poor as a hermeneutic can be seen as a relevant choice. Identifying the massive poverty and social injustice as the central challenge facing religious and the Church, CLAR's hermeneutic sought to theologically evaluate that reality. But this could only be done if conflictive nature of Latin American societies was taken seriously. Within a context where the poor were struggling under oppression and the Church was seen as allied with the social elite, a clear choice was necessary. The option for the poor called upon religious to choose the poor, neither to further a class struggle nor to sow hatred against the rich. Instead, for CLAR, the option was a choice for the poor in order to reveal the dignity of all people and the pressing need to build communion between the classes.

CLAR's choice did not just involve abstract theory or the addition of new pastoral works for the poor's advancement. Instead, CLAR sought to redirect the vision of religious, their internal life and praxis in order to make the poor a constant point of reference. For some, CLAR's position appears as an exclusive or classist interpretation of the option for the poor but this neglects CLAR's stated goal, the construction of just relationships between all social classes in Latin America.

The option for the poor could also be liberating for religious. In the first place the option offered an important hermeneutic to evaluate reality which was coupled with a clear utopian ideal, the Kingdom and reconciliation and justice in society. This allowed religious communities to critically evaluate their life and evangelization with a criterion that goes beyond a) the self interest of their congregations or b) an ecclesiocentrism which can often be defensive and dogmatic. Through the option for the poor, religious are freed from both tendencies. But the option offered not just a utopian ideal, but a demand that religious evaluate their life and evangelization in relationship to the poor within their society. Religious were to judge themselves not solely in terms of a future ideal but actual relationship with the poor.

The attempt to read the Bible from the perspective of the poor could likewise be liberating for religious. From experience among the poor, religious discovered different images of God and Jesus, as well as a spirituality of insertion for religious life.

On both of these points, the option for the poor and the use of the Bible, this study believes that CLAR had given insights which can assist religious in contexts beyond Latin America. Through the option for the poor, the life and evangelization of religious are given a focus which can be theologically justified and which does not alienate them from the concrete socio-political context in which they live. Likewise, CLAR's use of the Bible represents a great contribution which goes beyond disputes over its methodology. After the Second Vatican

Council, religious discovered that their life could find no justification in specific biblical references. For many religious this realization provoked a crisis. CLAR's program represents a shift which moves religious life from using the Bible as a means to legitimate their existence to a book of life. Religious assume the evangelical basis of their life, since they are striving to follow Jesus and live the Gospel, and enter the Bible bringing with them their lives, socio-political contexts and challenges in order to leave with fresh insights that can lead to liberating action. This use of the Bible as living book can help religious in other contexts grappling with ways to relate their faith to socio-political realities.

13.3 Comunidades insertas: Subject of contextual theology

After Puebla, CLAR made an important shift and, in effect, allowed the *comunidades insertas* to fulfill the role of subject for a contextual theology of religious life for Latin America. CLAR theologians focused on the tensions and concerns which arose from the praxis of the *comunidades insertas*. More importantly, CLAR theologians try to harvest the insights and reflections of the *comunidades insertas* through the CRIMPO project in order to fashion a spirituality of insertion for all Latin American religious. CLAR also saw the *comunidades insertas* as a new form of religious life which could allow a different relationship with the poor and in so doing overcome the alienation by religious from the Latin American cultures.⁹⁶ While in magisterial documents there is praise for the religious in the *comunidades insertas*, they are seen differently than by CLAR.

13.3.1 Comunidades insertas: New form of religious life or effective method of evangelization?

CLAR recognized, as the Council, that religious life should have a relationship to the socio-political context. The *comunidades insertas* were viewed as a new form of religious life, incarnated within the Latin American context of poverty, which tries to fashion a new relationship with the poor.

Through a change of social, cultural and spiritual location the *comunidades insertas* forged new relationships with the poor. They accepted that daily life among the poor as well as popular religion could be sources which allowed enrichment of traditional religious life. As a result, CLAR saw the *comunidades insertas* as a new form of religious life which yielded insights into religious life, its spirituality and evangelization.

The *comunidades insertas* were seen as relevant to the Latin American social context as well as for Latin American religious. Through the *comunidades insertas* religious were able to live in radical fidelity to the option for the poor, evangelize the poor and participate in their liberation struggle. The *comunidades insertas* were also viewed as a response to the internal dissatisfaction within many religious congregations about their lifestyle and remoteness from the daily life of the

96 Cf. p. 196-197.

people. The *comunidades insertas* were seen as liberative for religious, freeing them from adherence to inherited West European religious life structures and spiritualities.⁹⁷

There appears in several magisterial documents a recognition of the *comunidades insertas*. These communities are praised: for fidelity to the option for the poor, as a means to evangelize the poor, and as allowing religious to be evangelized by the poor. They are, however, viewed primarily as exemplary ways of evangelization although inappropriate as houses for initial religious formation.⁹⁸ While there is praise for the *comunidades insertas* in magisterial documents, they are, nonetheless, viewed primarily as a new method of evangelizing the poor, and neither as a new form of religious life nor as a subject of a contextual theology.

13.3.2 Relevant and liberating?

Latin American religious had formulated a new form of *comunidad inserta* which was a relevant response to the Latin American context. While born from efforts by religious to evangelize the poor, the *comunidades insertas* were more than a method for evangelization. Rather, they were a concrete effort to re-direct religious life away from its inherited internal life structures and evangelization, which had often been linked to oppression, so that a new form of Latin American religious life could arise, tied to the liberation of the poor. For CLAR, this new form could arise only if religious took seriously their alienation from the poor majority and wished to integrate their lives and evangelization in a new social location.

The liberating aspect of the *comunidades insertas* flowed from this decision to shift social location. In place of internal life structures and spiritualities which stress separation from 'the world', the *comunidades insertas* shift religious to seek ever deeper incarnation among people. Through this incarnation, religious could begin to discover the values, daily reality and questions which dominated the lives of the poor. Also from this experience, religious were seen as able to evangelize and offer an eschatological witness which is understandable and authentic.

The *comunidades insertas* also liberated religious congregations by raising difficult questions, to which formerly little attention was given. Thus through the example of the *comunidades insertas*, religious congregations – if they took these communities seriously – were challenged to question their own social location, the relationship of geography and evangelization, the unity of their internal life and evangelization, and whether their spirituality rests upon a exaltation (if ever so subtle) of religious life above the laity.

97 Cf. p. 227-229.

98 CRIS, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 27-28. Idem, *Fraternal Life in Community* 63. Idem, *RHP* 7-10 is similar although it addresses the broader issue of insertion among the working classes. Also *Puebla* 731; 733.

This study is convinced that these questions from the *comunidades insertas* have an importance far beyond the borders of Latin America. It is not just in Latin America that religious are wrestling with the uncomfortableness of the evangelical vow of poverty. Nor is Latin America alone facing an increasing gap between the poor and the rich in society. Nor are Latin American religious alone in seeking a wholistic life, one that makes the connection between the individual religious and the community as well as between the community as the rest of society. Finally, religious in other parts of the world are still suffering a painful self-questioning about its value as a result of the Vatican Council's recognition of equality of the People of God and the universal call to holiness. As a consequence, religious life is often seen either in functional terms ("but one can do this or that task as a lay person?") or as totally identical to the laity. The *comunidades insertas* challenge religious to discover their identity in terms of fidelity to the Gospel and a never ceasing desire to manifest in word and deed the Kingdom among the poor, abandoned and rejected by society.

13.4 CLAR's contextual understanding of religious life

CLAR sought a theology of religious life which was relevant for the context of Latin America. In so doing it eventually stressed the need by religious: to follow the liberating praxis of Jesus, to accept material poverty as a part of the evangelical counsel of poverty, to interpret the founder's charism beginning with the present, and to see religious life as in an ongoing state of evolution. While accepting the ecclesiality of religious life, CLAR view religious life as a part of the charismatic pole of the Church which was assisting in the construction of the Church of the Poor in Latin America. From the magisterial documents, different understandings are evident on these issues which provide a sharp contrast to CLAR.

13.4.1 Vatican II: New understanding of religious life plus a call for renewal and adaptation

The Second Vatican Council provides a new understanding of the religious life. The religious life is seen neither as a perfect form of Christian life nor as a middle layer in the Church's hierarchy between the laity and the clergy. Rather, religious life is part of the Church which is portrayed in a variety of ways⁹⁹ and blessed with a variety of charisms from the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁰ Religious life is seen as a gift

99 Among others *LG* 4; 6-8; 9-17; 48. In this diversity, the Council Fathers go beyond Pope Pius XII's ecclesiology of the Body of Christ (*mystici corporis*) and introduce others images for the Church: sacrament, communion, the People of God, the sheepfold, the temple of God, spouse of Christ.

100 Among others: *LG* 4; 7; 12; *AG* 23. In the 1943 encyclical *Mystici Corporis* Pope Pius XII recognizes hierarchical and charismatic elements in the Church, which are united within the Church in a way that does lead to opposition (*mc* 14-17). The Second Vatican Council ratifies this view (*LG* 4; 7-8; 12; 44) though without providing a clearly elaborated theology. The Council states also that the hierarchy is responsible for ensuring that religious remain faithful to their charisms (*LG* 45).

from the Holy Spirit for the entire Church but a gift which throughout the centuries has taken many diverse forms. Yet in spite of this diversity, religious life is understood as a stable lifestyle with ecclesiastically approved means of spiritual growth.¹⁰¹

Religious also have a special role to fulfill in the Church and, as part of the "life and holiness" of the Church (LG 44), should provide a witness of God's love, and the Kingdom of God. This is done primarily through fidelity to the three evangelical counsels, which are a form of witness that is universal and not limited by historical era or culture. The reason for this is that the evangelical counsels are more than a means for the manifestation of an eschatological witness. Through a life of the counsels religious renounce some goods (i.e. marriage, property, complete freedom) and become a sign of living martyrdom which mirrors Christ who was poor, chaste and obedient. Thus through a faithful living of the evangelical counsels religious follow Christ and in so doing provide a witness of the Kingdom for all peoples.¹⁰²

Special importance is placed upon evangelical poverty, which is described as demanding more than submission to the will of the superior in the use of goods. Instead, religious are told that they "must be poor in fact and in spirit" (PC 13), and that their poverty should affect their work. The Council further recognizes that living the counsel of evangelical poverty should be in relation to the local socio-cultural context and goes so far as to suggest that "new forms of voluntary poverty" may be necessary (PC 13).

Yet the eschatological witness of religious does not consist solely in the observance of the three evangelical counsels. On the contrary, religious, as part of their eschatological witness, must also actively work for the Kingdom's expansion through prayer and pastoral work.¹⁰³

Joined to a new understanding of religious life, the Second Vatican Council also presents religious congregations with a twofold challenge, namely internal renewal and adaptation to the modern world. Internal renewal of religious congregations demands a reappraisal of existing religious practices and community structures with an ongoing return to the sources of Christian life, including the "original spirit of the institutes" (PC 2). The criteria for this reappraisal are listed as:

- the following of Jesus according to the Gospels (described as the "ultimate norm" for all religious life) (PC 2a);

101 LG 43-45. PC 1.

102 LG 31; 34; 39; 42-46. PC 1; 2e; 5; 12-14. P. Molinari-P. Gumpel, *Chapter VI of the Dogmatic Constitution 'Lumen Gentium' on Religious Life*, Ancora (Rome, 1987): 61-82, esp. 61-72. For Molinari and Gumpel the evangelical counsels are an expression of Christian martyrdom and a central motif of *Lumen Gentium*.

103 Among others: LG 44. PC 2d; 8.

- the “founders spirit of the institutes and the special aims they set before them as well as their sound traditions” (*PC 2b*);
- changes in accord with Church’s renewal (*PC 2c*);
- knowledge of social reality and Church needs (*PC 2d*);
- need to reawaken spirit as well as other changes (*PC 2e*).

The work of adaptation requires that congregations modify their internal life and evangelization to the socio-cultural reality in which they live.¹⁰⁴

The Council also gives attention to the common traits of religious life as well as to the uniqueness of specific congregations. *Lumen Gentium* (V; VI) and *Perfectae Caritatis* discuss common aspects, shared by all religious, regardless of congregation. At the same time, the Council also stresses the importance of each religious congregation’s uniqueness because the diversity of religious life is seen as enriching the Church (*LG 43*). Furthermore, the Council recognizes that the renewal of religious life must flow from the specific characteristics of each religious congregation. Congregations are told to return to the “original spirit of the institutes” (*PC 2*).

Liberating praxis or observance of the evangelical counsels?

For CLAR the eschatological witness of religious flowed from continuing the praxis of Jesus in history. The evangelical counsels were neither the basis of religious life nor did their observance alone provide for a clear eschatological witness in Latin America. Instead, the eschatological witness of religious flowed from and was a continuation of the praxis of Jesus, who made a clear option for the poor. Therefore in Latin America, this eschatological witness had to include praxis for the poor’s liberation.¹⁰⁵

Post-conciliar magisterial documents stress that religious make their witness of the Kingdom and follow Christ through fidelity to the three evangelical counsels and in pastoral works (*ET 7; 10*). Yet the following of Christ is also seen as demanding that religious become active in issues of peace and justice (*ET 17; 18*). Religious are told that:

“...you must give your full attention to the needs of men [sic?], their problems and their searching; you must give witness in their midst, through prayer and action to the Good News of love, justice and peace” (*ET 52*).

Echoes of this link between following Christ, observance of the evangelical counsels and action for social justice can also be found in the 1978 CRIS document *Religious and Human Promotion*. The evangelical counsels are described as a prophetic witness which allows a conversion that opens religious for response to social needs, such as support for human development and the defence of the

104 *PC 2-3; 8; 20*.

105 Cf. p. 76-78, 108-110.

poor.¹⁰⁶ However, in later magisterial documents this connection between the religious eschatological witness, following Christ, and social justice works is de-emphasized. Increasingly the stress is placed upon the observance of the evangelical counsels as the way in which religious follow Christ and thereby make a eschatological witness.¹⁰⁷

CLAR and the Magisterium accepted the Council's demand that religious make an eschatological witness through modelling the life of Jesus. For CLAR, this demanded that religious go beyond the observance of the three evangelical counsels and mold their praxis to Jesus'. This should lead religious to make the option of the poor, as Jesus did, and work of the liberation of the poor as an aspect of their eschatological witness. The later magisterial documents, on the other hand, identify religious following of Jesus and eschatological witness with faithful observance of the evangelical counsels.

Evangelical poverty: Material or spiritualized?

CLAR heard the Council's high praise for evangelical poverty and the possibility for new forms of living it in the modern world. Reflecting from the context of Latin America, CLAR concluded that the observance of evangelical poverty had to include an acceptance of the common material poverty of the people. Only in this way could religious witness of the Kingdom and make an unambiguous expression of solidarity with the poor.¹⁰⁸

The importance of evangelical poverty in the public witness by religious is emphasized in post-conciliar magisterial documents. There is, nonetheless, a development in how it is understood. *Evangelica Testificatio* places a great stress on the material aspects of evangelical poverty, advising religious to "live in poverty in the use of this world's goods which are necessary for your daily subsistence" (ET 16). *Evangelica Testificatio* also links the evangelical counsel of poverty to an openness to the 'cry of the poor' (ET 17), sharing goods with them and recognizing that some religious will "join the poor in their situation and to share their bitter cares" (ET 18). Yet later magisterial documents focus less on evangelical poverty as actual material want. Instead, the poverty of religious is spiritualized and its practice equated with a community's sharing of property.¹⁰⁹

106 RHP intro; 2-6; 14-19; 23.

107 Among others: RD 5-9; 14. EE 5-7; 10; 13-17; 34-37. *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 7; 10-11.

108 Cf. p. 78, 113-114, 135-136.

109 This concern is apparent even in the immediate post-conciliar years: *Ecclesiae Sanctae* II 23-24. Pope Paul VI, *Address of May 23, 1964 to All Religious*, p. 8-9. Pope John Paul II's *Redemptionis Donum* (1984) places great value on the evangelical poverty of religious but it is primarily a call to be 'poor in spirit' (RD 12). CRIS, *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life* (1983) says that, "The religious forgoes the free use and disposal of his or her property, depends through the lawful superior on the institute for the provision of material goods, puts gifts and all salaries in common as belonging to

For CLAR the practice of evangelical poverty has to include some sharing in the material poverty of the Latin American people. In contrast to this, the Magisterium increasing identifies the practice of evangelical poverty with common ownership of goods by a religious community.

Charism of the founders

CLAR saw the need for the interpretation and translation of the various charisms of the founder/esses in the context of Latin America. In order to do so the option for the poor was seen as the means through which a congregation's charism could give a relevant response to the actual challenges of Latin America. The use of the option for the poor as a hermeneutic also was seen as liberating for religious, freeing them from interpretations which are alien to Latin America and formerly had been co-opted by the dominant ideology.¹¹⁰

The charism of the founders was, as earlier mentioned, a theological term introduced in post-conciliar discussions. Several concerns are apparent around magisterial discussions. First, the charism of the founders is seen as linking religious to their congregation's founder/ess' experience of God. Through the congregation's tradition and spirituality, religious are put into contact with this experience and allowed to grow in it. Religious also acquire through their congregational charisms a view of reality and an apostolate which is understood to flow from founder/ess' ideals. Second, the diversity of religious founder's charisms is seen as a gift of the Spirit which enriches the entire Church and thus in need of preservation by the hierarchy. Third, the charism of the founders has to relate to contemporary needs, social as well as ecclesial.

In magisterial documents the interpretation of the charism of the founders can be seen in two ways. First, *Religious and Human Promotion* (1978) tells religious that the interpretation of their founder's charism has to be done in dynamic fidelity to their founder/ess' intentions and the contemporary *signs of the times*.¹¹¹ In this way religious are seen as needing to balance their past tradition with the contemporary calls of the Spirit. Yet, this approach in *Religious and Human Promotion* is somewhat of an exception. The vast majority of magisterial documents stress not a balance between present and past but the necessity for religious congregations to return to their past original inspirations. These inspirations from the founder/ess are seen as pointing to authentic identity and forms of pastoral action which congregations need to preserve. It is through more complete knowledge of the founder/ess and the tradition of the congregation that its unique charism can be discovered.¹¹² The stress is increasingly placed upon the congre-

the community and contributes to a simple manner of life" (EE 16 and III, 20-21). CRIS, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 14. Idem, *Fraternal Life in Community* 44.

110 Cf. p. 78-79, 115-116, 230-234.

111 RHP 28-31.

112 ET 11. MR 11-12; (where a part of the discernment of the charism of the founders is "an

gational charisms as stable and fixed, giving religious a definite identity and specific pastoral works.¹¹³

CLAR emphasized the presence of the Spirit in contemporary history, pointing the way in which religious should live and act. This leads to the option for the poor as a hermeneutic for discernment. The magisterial focus is elsewhere, namely on the received tradition of religious congregations as the place where religious can hear and experience the Spirit. Fidelity to the charism of the founders, demands first a focus on the congregation's past and then incarnating essential aspects of it into the present life and action of religious.

A changing or inherited way of life?

CLAR accepted the historicity of religious life and the fact that it has changed throughout the centuries. In its search for the basis of religious life, CLAR saw both the consecration of religious and the evangelical counsels as the result of historical developments. Though important for religious life, neither could be seen as a *sine qua non* of religious life. For CLAR, this search led to viewing the experience of God as the basis of all religious life. While God is always the same, how people experience Him/Her varies, depending upon the concrete historical and cultural conditions. In Latin America, CLAR stated that the experience of God could be most clearly found among the poor.¹¹⁴ This understanding was seen as a relevant since it joined religious life to the need to find and experience God in a specific cultural context. For CLAR, the experience of God is the basis of religious life which could liberate religious from legalism and West European forms of spirituality.

Within the magisterial documents, a stress is increasingly placed upon religious life and identity as fixed and defined by an ecclesiastically approved tradition. This is because the tradition contains the essential elements of religious life and the three evangelical counsels are viewed as a witness which is universal, even anthropological based.¹¹⁵

outlook cautiously directed to the signs of the times"). Even *Religious and Human Promotion* contains this idea of the need to return to the 'ardor of the founders' (RHP 30).

113 Pope John Paul II sees this tradition as including: a clear identity, form of spirituality, apostolate and tradition (RD 7; 15. EE 11; 25). This connection between the approved common apostolate and the charism of the founders is seen as so strong that: "This common and constant apostolate is part of the institute's sound traditions. It is so closely related to identity that it cannot be changed without affecting the character of the institute itself" (RD 25). MR 57a. CRIS, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 16. Idem, *Fraternal Life in Community* 45-46. It is interesting to note that the 1983 Code of Canon Law does not use charism (or charism of the founders) in its treatment of religious life.

114 Cf. p. 75-76, 105-108.

115 MR 11; RD 7. In *Redemptoris Donum*, Pope John Paul II declares that the evangelical counsels have an anthropological basis which manifest values to all humanity: "The religious profession touches upon the very roots of humanity" (RD 4) and can "speak forcefully to today's world" (RD 17). Similar in CRIS, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* 11. Idem, EE 34; ("...religious willingly accept a pattern of life that is not

CLAR based religious life upon the experience of God. As a consequence, the identity of religious life was seen as always determined by a relationship with changing socio-political and cultural realities. The magisterial focus is on the need by religious to preserve an identity whose origin flows from the past tradition and needs certain elements, seen as essential for its life and public witness.

13.4.2 Ecclesiality of religious life

For CLAR the ecclesiality of religious life flowed from an understanding of the Church as composed of charismatic and institutional poles as well as the need for religious to be active agents in the construction of the Church of the Poor.

Church as charismatic and institutional?

CLAR accepted the Council's discussion on the charisms in the Church as pointing to a separate charismatic structure which complements and exists alongside the hierarchical. It centered attention upon the charismatic, the gifts of the Spirit which were arising from amidst the poor to renew the Latin American Church. CLAR saw the Church as composed of two different complementary poles: institutional and charismatic. The institutional pole, to which the hierarchy belongs, was viewed as maintaining dogma and the Church's sacramental services. Contrasted to this was the charismatic pole which focuses on community renewal and an openness to new impulses from the Holy Spirit. Religious were seen as belonging to this charismatic pole.

While other ecclesiological perspectives were added after Puebla, this remains the dominant way in which CLAR viewed the Church. It was seen as offering an image of Church which was relevant in Latin America, where new ministries and forms of community were arising from the initiative of the poor, not the hierarchy. From this perspective, religious can be freed from seeing their life and witness as clerical, flowing from the institutional Church's interests.¹¹⁶

In the post-conciliar period, much effort is given into clarifying the relationship between religious and the hierarchy.¹¹⁷ The most famous is the 1978 document, *Mutuae Relationes*, which tries to delineate the relationship in terms of clearly defined ecclesial roles, mutual dialogue and obedience by religious to the bishops.¹¹⁸ In *Mutuae Relationes* there is a rejection of any ecclesiology which understands the Church in terms of rival charismatic and institutional dimensions:

permissive but largely laid down for them"). "Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to the Bishops of the United States April 3, 1983," # 3. S. Euart, "A Canonical Analysis of *Essential Elements* in the Light of the 1983 Code of Canon Law," *The Jurist*, vol. 45 (1985): 438-442. Although CRIS and the Pope agree that some elements are essential for religious life, they do not list the same ones.

116 Cf. p. 120-122, 222.

117 Very soon after the Council *Renovationis Causam* (1969) stresses religious life has a clear relationship to the hierarchical structure of the Church (RC 2).

118 *MR* 5-14; 15-23; 29.

“It would be a serious error to see as independent (and more serious to oppose) religious life and the ecclesial structures, as if they dealt with distinct realities, one charismatic and the other institutional, which are able to exist separately” (MR 34).¹¹⁹

Later magisterial documents stress that religious have a definite relation to the Church’s institutional structure and should not see themselves as structurally apart from the hierarchy.¹²⁰

While CLAR pointed to a separate charismatic structure which complements and exists alongside the hierarchical, the magisterial documents place increasingly greater emphasis on the link between religious and the Church’s institutional structures.

Church of the Poor

CLAR heard the Council’s call that the Church must be a clear sign and sacrament to all. As sign and sacrament, the Church had to witness the equality and dignity of all members of the People of God. Nonetheless, in Latin America the poor were treated as unequal, materially, socially and culturally, to other Catholics who were rich. Therefore, for the Church to be a sign and sacrament in Latin America, a shift was seen as necessary, towards a community of equality and dignity for all members of the People of God. This could only be achieved through re-rooting the Church among those whom society viewed as the least important, the poor. For CLAR, Latin America needed a Church of the Poor in order to offer a clear witness. Religious, as part of the Church’s charismatic pole and needing to make a prophetic witness within the Church, were called upon to be active agents in the Church of the Poor’s construction.

A Church of the Poor was also necessary in order to free the Church’s members and institutional structure from the effects of dependency. In a context where the poor are prevented from community through changes brought by dependency, they bring their condition of massification to the Church. A Church of the Poor was seen as necessary to help the poor receive an identity and discover their charisms. Church structures were also affected by dependency. While claiming to witness equality and justice, the Church’s structures had often legitimated the social *status quo* of exploitation and oppression.¹²¹

119 Similar in MR 3. The text cites LG 8 and notes that charismatic gifts and ecclesial structures are united in one ‘reality’.

120 CRIS, *Essential Elements in the Church’s Teaching on Religious Life* states that “Religious life has its own place in relation to the divine and hierarchical structure of the Church” (EE 38). Religious life is described as a part of the ‘sacramental’ aspect of the Church “by being an outward, social sign of the mystery of God’s consecrating action” (EE 38) and related to hierarchical structure since all congregations were approved by the hierarchy (EE 41-43). *The Final Report* of the 1985 Synod of Bishops focusses on the Church as mystery and a communion in which the diversity of charisms is seen as a sign of pluriformity within the Church, not a separate structure (II, C 2). CRIS, *Fraternal Life in Community* 10.

121 Cf. pp. 118-120, 128, 132-133, 223-224.

In spite of the emotion surrounding the issue of the Church of the Poor within Latin America, there is little comment on this in magisterial documents or, even in letters between CLAR and CRIS after the 1989 intervention. Nonetheless, *Liberatis Nuntius* sees efforts to construct a Church of the Poor as reducing the Church to a purely human work, forgetting that it is above all the response to a divine call. Concern is also expressed that the construction of a Church of the Poor was a way to bypass the Church's hierarchy.¹²²

For CLAR, in the context of Latin America, only a Church of the Poor could provide a public witness of the Church as sign and sacrament of God. The Magisterium's concern is elsewhere, namely in reasserting the importance of the hierarchy and the Church's transcendental nature.

13.4.3 Relevant and liberating?

CLAR strove to fashion a contextual theological understanding of religious life which was relevant to Latin American as well as liberating for religious. This study has identified five issues in which CLAR's understanding of religious life differed from the magisterial views. CLAR made a different interpretation and stressed elements from the Council which later magisterial documents chose either to downplay or modify. Now the question reappears: can CLAR's choices be understood as relevant and liberating?

As a thread running through each of these five issues there was an intention by CLAR to make religious life and its public witness relevant to the context of Latin America. Relevancy demanded from religious not just increased attention to the socio-political and cultural reality but a radical change. Religious life had been bonded since the first days of the European invasion of Latin America with alien forces and still was in many respects estranged from the life, thought and spirituality of the people. Thus in CLAR's opinion, religious life had to become contextualized – replanted among the poor – so that a new form would emerge which is fully indigenous to the continent. It is with this understanding that CLAR discussed the need for: liberating praxis, material poverty, the option for the poor as hermeneutic for the charism of the founders, the historicity of religious life, and a charismatic-institutional view of the Church. The relevancy of its contextual theology of religious life was thus bound up with a need to liberate religious life from its past. Only a liberated religious life could be relevant to Latin America.

CLAR asked that religious model themselves on the liberating praxis of Jesus for the poor. In so doing CLAR had set religious life on its head. The observance of the evangelical counsels was no longer viewed as able to give an adequate public witness for religious life. For the people, religious who observed the evangelical counsels were not seen as witnesses of the Kingdom but alienated from society

122 *LN IX,8-13.*

and, quite possibly from their own humanity. CLAR concluded that the Latin American religious' following of Christ had to go beyond observance of the evangelical counsels and continue the liberating praxis of Jesus in the context of Latin America.

Some may argue that CLAR's position rather than liberating religious life enslaves it to socio-political concerns which are transitory. Instead of a focus on the vaguely defined praxis of Jesus, so this line would go, CLAR should have urged religious to a stricter life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Then the past abuses of religious life would be forgotten by the people and religious could make a witness in Latin American society.

This study believes that such a position, while on the surface appealing, misses what, for CLAR, is a central insight of the Vatican Council; the Church (and religious life) is in the world. Religious life is not an isolated island in the sea of humanity, but influenced by (and able to influence) society. In a situation where religious life has accepted many norms, standards and attitudes from society even the observance of the vows becomes questionable. Poverty becomes spiritualized, obedience becomes identified with passive submission to a superior rather than a community's fidelity to God's call, and chastity is understood in vague terms which deny human sexuality and basic human affective needs. So that even a stricter observance of the evangelical counsels does not necessarily lead to a clearer public witness of the Kingdom. It can also result in a reinforcement of attitudes and norms from society which like barnacles have attached themselves to congregation's interpretations of the evangelical counsels. In such a context, a radical shift is necessary which can shake loose new insights into religious life and the living of the evangelical counsels.

For this reason, CLAR stressed that religious continue Jesus' liberating praxis. It is also why CLAR emphasized that religious had to accept material poverty and view their life as a process of relating to an ever-changing history. There is never a denial of aspects of religious life which tradition has seen as central (consecration, the vows). But at the same time, there is no *a priori* assumption that the religious life in Latin America should follow the same historical course or development as in West Europe. Instead, CLAR wishes to liberate religious life from its acceptance of the dominant ideology and West European theologies of religious life.

CLAR's use of the option for the poor as a hermeneutic to interpret and contextualize the congregation's charisms of the founders can also be seen as liberating. Through the option for the poor, religious are freed from traditional interpretations of their congregation's charism and forced to begin not with a congregation's past but the present reality of Latin America. In so doing, many religious discover new insights into the connection between the congregations past and the poor. Finally, and perhaps most important, CLAR's approach manifests a connection between interpretation and praxis. The interpretation of the foundational charism was not seen as an intellectual exercise but linked to action; to answer the question how

religious should act in the context of Latin America. Interpretation of the charism of the founders was evidenced not in explanations or insights but a manner of life, which was for the poor.

Yet some may again wonder if CLAR did not try to liberate religious life from too much. Was there a depreciation of the unique traditions of religious congregations? Was CLAR trying to level all congregational charisms through its use of the option for the poor?

CLAR certainly displayed a tendency to bypass religious traditions and in so doing homogenize key elements of religious life. No distinctions are made between how different congregational traditions understood, for example, evangelical poverty or community life. Instead one interpretation was given for all religious, Jesuits, Sisters of Mercy and Franciscans.

While this is so, it is only a part of the picture. CLAR spoke in general terms about religious life but so also have many magisterial documents. In the context of Latin America, CLAR's goal was to bring religious together for renewal and mutual cooperation. Thus it stressed not the uniqueness of each religious congregation but the common aspects, shared by all religious. Finally, CLAR's intent was not to provide initial formation for religious; that was the task of the various religious congregations. Instead, CLAR was offering a perspective which could guide Latin American religious in the interpretation and inculturation of their congregation's charisms.

There is yet another aspect of CLAR's treatment of tradition through the use of the option for the poor. That is the lack of clarity which surrounds magisterial discussions in three areas.

First, there is an assumption in magisterial documents that all congregations have a unique tradition which flows from the spiritual experience/life of the founder/ess. This assumption is questionable and brings up a distinction which J.M.R. Tillard made between charism of the founder and a charism of foundation. According to Tillard, many congregations, especially women religious, were founded not as a result of a founder/ress' radical experience with the Spirit but for functional reasons: to teach in schools, to care for the sick, to visit the poor, or to care for priests. For Tillard while these congregations have a charism of foundation, they lack the unique spirituality necessary for a charism of the founder.¹²³

Second, the Second Vatican Council is ambiguous in its treatment of tradition. As O'Connor mentions, the Council affirmed the Spirit's presence in the ongoing historical evolution of a congregation and simultaneously stated that the renewal of religious life demanded the original inspiration of the founders. The ambiguity lies

123 J.M.R. Tillard, "El dinamismo de las fundaciones," *Vida Religiosa* (1982): 165-177. E. McDonough, "Beyond the Liberal Model: Quo Vadis?" *Review for Religious*, vol. 50 (1991): 185-186. McDonough, an American canon lawyer, states that many women's congregations encountered a major problem in responding to the Council's call to return to the founder's charism. The problem was, as Tillard suggests, namely that there was none originally.

precisely in where can one find the Spirit for the renewal of religious congregations: by looking for an original inspiration or in the tradition of a congregation which has over the course of time elaborated and developed this 'original inspiration'.¹²⁴ Third, within magisterial discussions the tradition of religious life is understood as an organic development, but this development has been more a series of ruptures than a smooth organic growth. Throughout history the hierarchy has often intervened in religious congregations, especially women's congregations, forcing understandings of religious life which were alien to the foundress/er's original ideals.¹²⁵

In the light of these issues CLAR's efforts appear differently, not as an attempt to homogenize all congregational charisms. Its efforts to use the option for the poor and develop a spirituality of insertion rather than destroying congregational charisms may have been a means to enrich congregations which previously had no charism of the founder. Similarly, CLAR saw renewal and the interpretation of the charism of the founders in terms of the Spirit's actions in the present not just the past. In this it clearly accepts the Council's call for a return to the original inspiration which for CLAR is always coupled with the option for the poor. Finally, CLAR had a critical perspective on traditions and knew well that discernment was necessary in interpreting the past. For within the past of any religious congregation lay misunderstandings, past interventions from the hierarchy, and complacency with the dominant ideology as well as the insights of the founder/ess.

124 E. O'Connor, "Vatican II and the Renewal of Religious Life," *Review for Religious*, vol. 26 (1967): 412-413. M. Tripole, "Four Ecclesial Problems Left Unresolved Since Vatican II," *Review for Religious*, vol. 46 (1987): 801-819. For Tripole, the tension between innovation and tradition remains one of the unresolved theological problems from the Second Vatican Council. L. Gutiérrez Vega, *Teología sistemática de la vida religiosa* (Madrid: Instituto Teológico de Vida Religiosa, 1976): 149-152. J. Gómez, "El 'retorno a los orígenes'; ese problema difícil de la renovación religiosa," *Vida Religiosa* (1971): 381-389. Both Gutiérrez and Gómez are concerned that an idealized version of the past could be pitted against the traditions of religious congregations.

125 V. Koluthara, *Rightful Autonomy of Religious Institutes* (Rome and Bangalore: CNS and Dharmaram Publications, 1994): 13. Koluthara mentions that there was a tendency to standardize religious life after the French Revolution and that this is evident in the 1917 Code of Canon Law. R. Hostie, *Leven en dood van de religieuze instituten* (Utrecht: Emmaus, 1972): 236. Hostie details the efforts by Pope Leo XIII to reorganize religious congregations through pontifical mandates (e.g. the Franciscans: 1897; the Benedictines: 1893; the Hermits of St. Augustine: 1893; the Trappists: 1892; and the Brothers of St. John of God: 1878). J. Cain, *The Influence of the Cloister on the Apostolate of Congregations of Religious Women*, Ph.D. diss., Pontifical University of the Lateran (Rome, 1965): esp. 49-50. L. Jarrell, *The Development of Legal Structures for Women Religious between 1500 and 1900*, Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America (Washington, 1984). The interference by the hierarchy into religious life has been particularly frequent in women religious congregations. Cain mentions that in 1749 Pope Benedict XIV ordered a women's congregation not to venerate Mary Ward or regard her as the foundress of the congregation. This restriction remained until 1909 when Pope Pius X reinstates Mary Ward as foundress of the IBVM congregation.

CLAR's ecclesiological viewpoint was certainly relevant, offering a useful way for religious to conceptualize the rise of the *CEBs* and the *comunidades insertas*. Seeing the Church in terms of charismatic and institutional could also be liberating for religious, freeing them from a clerical mentality which identifies religious life with the hierarchical structure and its interests. Yet this viewpoint also simplified reality and perhaps too much. Religious congregations are not charismatic movements (as Weber understood the term) but ecclesial institutions, which have their own interests to protect and defend.

Efforts to build a Church of the Poor should be seen in a similar way, not as the erection of a rival church but as a shift in the existing Church which could free it. Even before Puebla, CLAR recognized the gap between rich and poor was a theological scandal, denying certain rights to the poor and making a mockery out of the basic equality of all baptized. The Church of the Poor was an attempt to rectify this by shifting the focus of religious to the poor, who had for so long been given only peripheral attention.

But the controversy of the Church of the Poor was perhaps as much an institutional clash between CLAR and CELAM as a conflict over the poor. As this study has shown a fear that CLAR was becoming a 'parallel magisterium' has been a constant since 1972. CELAM's anxiety was that CLAR would bypass and render impotent the authority of CELAM in determining Latin American pastoral policies. Against the background of this anxiety, CLAR's support for a Church of the Poor appeared suspicious for many bishops.

It would be a mistake to dismiss this anxiety merely to the paranoia of some Latin American bishops. Instead, the unique context of Latin America should be kept in mind, a context in which more than 80% of the pastoral workers are religious. In a letter to the 1991 CLAR General Assembly, Francis McSweeney, President of the USG, commented on this situation:

"Over the course of the years, CLAR seems to be the true power in the Latin American Church. It has available more resources than the bishops: better theologians, specialists of every sort. An ability of reflection and a formidable organization. The orientations of CLAR are able to affect the entire continent's pastoral and not only the internal life of religious communities.

"If it is certain that we are driven by different options and models of Church than the official organism of the Latin American episcopate then conflict is inevitable. This is because the bishops have the primary responsibility for the pastoral. It is not sufficient to speak of a legitimate pluralism."¹²⁶

126 A. McSweeney, "Aporte a la XI Asamblea de la CLAR. Documento no. 17," in *XI Asamblea CLAR. México feb. 19-28 de 1991* (Bogotá: CLAR, 1991): 1-2, mimeo; ("Con el decurso de los años, la CLAR aparece como un verdadero poder en la Iglesia latinoamericana. Dispone de muchos más recursos que el Episcopado: mejores teólogos, especialistas de varios tipos. Una capacidad de reflexión y organización formidable. Las orientaciones

Father McSweeney's comments are insightful because they provide a glimpse at how many Latin American bishops viewed CLAR, as an institutional rival to CELAM. Yet this institutional clash with CELAM flows, at least partially, from the ambiguity of CLAR as an institution within the Latin American Church. Founded in 1959 as a *cosa grata* for CELAM, CLAR was given two objectives: the advancement of religious life and cooperation with CELAM. At that time, no possible conflict between these two goals was anticipated, but over the course of time CLAR and CELAM part ways. After which CLAR focussed almost exclusively on the promotion of religious life.

13.5 Religious life and evangelization

CLAR saw both an inextricable connection between religious consecration and evangelization as well as the need for a liberating evangelization in the context of Latin America. This led CLAR to stress an evangelization which sought the change of oppressive social structures, the possibility of partisan political activity by religious, and the need for an extension of the exemption which religious congregations enjoy from the authority of the local bishop. On each of these three points, CLAR was seen to have adopted positions which differ from magisterial documents.

13.5.1 Vatican II and the evangelization by religious

The Second Vatican Council stresses that all baptized need to share in the Church's mission activity.¹²⁷ While a common duty, this does not mean uniformity, but rather that participation in the Church's missionary activity is determined by one's vocation. The laity are viewed as competent and responsible for evangelizing socio-political and cultural institutions.¹²⁸ The Council says:

"The apostolate in the social milieu, that is, efforts to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of the community in which one lives, is so much the duty of the laity that it can never be performed properly by others" (AA 13).

Religious participate in the Church's mission through 'apostolic action' and the witness of their life.¹²⁹ They are told to "implant and strengthen the Kingdom of Christ in souls and to extend that Kingdom to every clime" (LG 44). While the way in which religious fulfill this duty can take various forms, depending on the

tomadas por la CLAR pueden así condicionar la pastoral de todo el continente y no solamente la vida interna de las comunidades religiosas. Si es cierto que, frente al organismo oficial del Episcopado Latinoamericano, somos animados por 'diferentes opciones y distintos modelos de Iglesia', el conflicto resulto inevitable, dado que los primeros responsables de la pastoral son los obispos. Y no es suficiente hablar de pluralismo legítimo").

127 AG 1; 7; 15; 23; 35. AA 2-4.

128 AG 19-21; 41. AA 3-5; 7; 9-15. GS 43.

129 Among others, PC 5-8; 20. AG 35-41. LG 30-38; 41-45.

charism of religious congregations, the Council states that "apostolic and charitable activity belongs to the very nature of religious life" (PC 8). Religious participate in the Church's mission through the witness of a life, faithful to the three evangelical counsels.

There is no role for religious mentioned in the evangelization of the political, although they are expected, like bishops and priests, to offer guidance and education for the laity in the fulfillment of their responsibility.¹³⁰

The autonomy of religious congregations (which have been granted pontifical rights¹³¹) is also affirmed by the Second Vatican Council. At the same time the Council reminds religious of their duty to work in the Church's mission.¹³² A clear understanding of this autonomy appears in *Christus Dominus* (CD 33-35) which distinguishes between the external witness (including their work of evangelization, which is under the direct supervision of the bishop) and the internal life-governance of religious congregations (which is exempt from the intervention by the bishops).

Liberating evangelization and social structures

CLAR accepted the Council's call that religious be active in the Church's evangelization. But in the context of Latin America, evangelization was seen as having to recognize the importance and power of social structures. Through analysis of the social reality, CLAR found Latin America as dominated by social structures which perpetuate sinful relationships of exploitation, limit freedom and deprive the poor of identity. As a consequence, CLAR advocated a liberating evangelization which emphasized conscientization and active support for the transformation of existing social, ideological and political structures.¹³³

CLAR understood this liberating evangelization as a relevant way to announce the Gospel in the Latin American reality in which many Catholics tolerated the exploitation of the poor. It was also seen as liberating religious, challenging them to free their works of evangelization from the limits and distortions of the dominant ideology.

In the early post conciliar years magisterial documents recognize the importance of social structures for Christian action and evangelization.¹³⁴ This is highlighted in the 1971 Synod of Bishops' acknowledgement of the power of social structures

130 GS 43, AA 25. Similar in AA 7; 20-21; 28-32.

131 Religious congregations with pontifical right have been granted autonomy from direct control of the bishop by the Holy See. Another classification for religious congregations, diocese institutes, fall more directly under the control of the bishop. The following discussion concerns congregations with pontifical rights.

132 LG 33; 45. PC 8.

133 Cf. p. 98-99, 133-134, 218-220.

134 PP 21.

"This desire [for development-jk] however will not satisfy the expectations of our time if it ignores the objective obstacles which social structures place in the way of conversion of hearts, or even of the realization of the ideal of charity."¹³⁵

Liberation is also viewed as linked to evangelization. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* evangelization is seen as needing "to transform the hearts of each and every man [sic?], along with their activities, their lives and their whole environment" (EN 18). For Pope Paul, this points to a link between evangelization and liberation,¹³⁶ although this should not be seen only in socio-economic terms. Rather, for Pope Paul, liberation has to affect all aspects of human life. It is further seen that juster social structures come only as a result of conversion to God.¹³⁷

Later magisterial documents stress that it is through personal conversion that changes in social structures can occur. One reason for this is that sin in social structures is viewed as a consequence of personal sin, rather than a cause of sin. *Liberatis Nuntius* says that one cannot "localize evil principally or uniquely in bad social, political or economic structures" because "structures, whether good or bad, are the result of man's [sic?] actions and so are consequences more than causes" (LN IV, 15).¹³⁸ Another reason for the focus on personal conversion flows from an understanding that human freedom does not come from social structures. Admitting that human freedom can be restricted by social structures, there is a firm desire to deny any form of determinism. The individual has free choice, although new social structures can expand areas of human freedom.¹³⁹

CLAR stressed that the identity of the poor and the freedom of all to choose the good was limited by sinful social structures. For this reason its focus was upon a liberating evangelization that sought the change of social structures. In the magisterial documents, there is a recognition of the importance of social structures as well as social sin which can reside in them. Yet, there is also a concern that human freedom should not be interpreted in a deterministic manner. As a consequence, the freedom of the individual to choose good or evil is stressed. Unjust social structures are seen as the result of individual personal sins with personal conversion as the way to change them.

135 *Justice in the World* [1971 Synod of Bishops-jk], (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1971): 7, section I.

136 EN 29-31. Also in the 1985 Synod of Bishops, *The Final Report*, II, D, 6.

137 EN 18-19; 33-37.

138 LN XI, 8-9. A more nuanced description appears in LC 75 although the priority remains on personal conversion.

139 LC 30-33; 42. In *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, Pope John Paul II acknowledges the influence of social reality on personal sin. Within a society, injustice can be accepted and considered so normal that it becomes almost invisible. Yet the accent is placed upon the freedom of the individual to choose between good and evil (RP 16). Similarly in RM 59. srs 36.

Political action of religious?

CLAR was driven to establish equality and as a consequence saw religious life not as superior to the laity but sharing an equal responsibility with them as the People of God. With this understanding, CLAR rejected any *a priori* limits to the evangelization by religious. Although there was no advocacy and some difference of opinion, CLAR stated that religious could, if necessary, engage in partisan political actions.¹⁴⁰

The Council's acceptance of different areas of competency between laity and religious in evangelization is echoed in later magisterial documents.¹⁴¹ The 1978 CRIS document *Religious and Human Promotion* rejects any partisan political activity by religious as incompatible with the religious' public witness to the Kingdom of God (*RHP* 11-12). Yet even *Religious and Human Promotion* admits that exceptions may arise in which political activity by religious may be acceptable, although this must be approved by the local bishop and the religious superiors (*RHP* 12b.5).

Similarly, religious are seen as contributing to the evangelization of the socio-political arena but indirectly. Religious are asked to offer guidance, formation in the Church's social doctrine and support for the laity so that they can bring Gospel values to political discussion and decisions.¹⁴²

Both CLAR and the Magisterium are hesitant to allow partisan political actions by religious. The difference while subtle between the two is important. CLAR begins from a position that religious are members of the People of God and share the same duties as other members in the Church, including political responsibility. This position sometimes demands that religious engage in political activity for parties in order to make their eschatological witness. For the Magisterium, religious are seen as giving up the right and duty to partisan political action as part of their religious consecration. As a result partisan political action by religious is viewed as deleterious to the public witness of religious.

The exemption of religious: Its limits?

CLAR took seriously the Council's call that religious see evangelization as important to their life. Through reflecting on religious life and its evangelization, CLAR eventually concluded that the consecration of religious and mission are inextricably united. With this understanding, CLAR eventually concluded that evangelization by religious, like its internal life, should enjoy a degree of independence from the local bishops. In effect, CLAR sought to extend the canonical exemption¹⁴³ of religious

140 Cf. p. 68, 131-132, 220-221.

141 *EN* 66-73. *SRS* 46. *RD* 7. *RM* 61-76. *CL* 15; 20-23; 55-56. *LC* 80. *EE* 43.

142 *RHP* 12b.2. *CL* 60-61. *SRS* 41 states that the "teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission".

143 V. Koluthara, *Rightful Autonomy of Religious Institutes*, p. 15. According to Koluthara, the exemption of religious is a withdrawal "from the authority of his or her immediate

to include evangelization.¹⁴⁴ This extension of the exemption would allow religious to have a liberating evangelization, relevant for the poor and freeing religious from past approaches, which a local bishops would be unable to prevent.

Magisterial documents after the Council stress the importance of evangelization for religious life.¹⁴⁵ The 1983 CRIS document *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life* goes so far as to state that "consecration inevitably implies mission" (EE 23). At the same time, there is a reaffirmation of the distinction from *Christus Dominus* between the internal life and external witness of religious congregations.¹⁴⁶

Seeing religious life and evangelization so intricately bound, CLAR viewed the exemption of religious as needing expansion beyond *Christus Dominus'* distinctions. The magisterial documents maintain this conciliar distinction between the internal and external life, granting only the former a degree of exemption from the local bishop's authority.

13.5.2 Relevant and liberating?

CLAR's reflections about the relationship between religious and evangelization can be understood as an attempt to make a break with the past, a sort of 'farewell to innocence'. Instead of an evangelization which claims to neutrally transmit the Gospel, CLAR boldly proclaimed that social structures limit everyone's freedom, including the agent of evangelization, through acceptance of a dominant ideology. Instead of an evangelization which makes a clear division between *ad intra* and *ad extra* ecclesial concerns, CLAR united the two. The internal life and external witness of religious were viewed as impossible to divide as *Christus Dominus* had done. In making this break with the past, CLAR's intent was not iconoclastic. Instead it challenged religious and the Church to be relevant to the present conditions of Latin America but with a critical awareness of past complicity between evangelization and initial conquest by the Spanish and Portuguese.

Forging a new evangelization for religious life meant that religious should liberate their present praxis in order to help liberate others and themselves. CLAR took seriously the link between liberation and evangelization, and saw this in terms of a common project which joined religious and the poor. Through active support for structural change in society, religious helped the poor and their liberation. But a liberating evangelization also helped religious, whose freedom was also limited by unjust social structures and social sin. Thus CLAR's view of the connection between evangelization and liberation goes beyond the 1971 Synod of Bishops and

superior or his representative" in order to be placed under a higher superior. Autonomy is a recognition of the right by a congregation to its own identity and self-rule. Koluthara stresses that these two terms are inter-related.

144 Cf. p. 226.

145 Among others: ET 50-53. EN 69. RD 14-15. RHP 21. RM 69.

146 ET 50. MR 22-23; 53.

Evangelii Nuntiandi. In a sense CLAR can be seen as accepting the consequences of the Council's acknowledgement that religious life (and the Church) are not isolated from human society. Within a social reality of oppression, everyone, including religious, have less freedom.

To determine if CLAR's efforts were liberating, one has to face the charges that its approach weakened and politicized evangelization as well as prevented the eschatological witness of religious. So the question is: to what extent CLAR's new evangelization can be seen liberating?

Instead of an abstract view of human freedom, CLAR had an understanding that human freedom is contextually limited. Social structures can allow for greater or lesser space in which people can live and freely develop. Additionally, religious, as agent of evangelization, do not stand apart from this context, for social structures can impede or expand the ability to evangelize. It is with this in mind that one should view CLAR's call for a liberating evangelization, and advocacy of new social structures. CLAR neither denied personal sin, human freedom nor that personal conversion was important for the social change. Nor was CLAR's focus on abstract concerns about the need to stress human freedom against deterministic philosophies. Instead, CLAR was concerned with the concrete social reality of Latin America in which oppressive social structures limited individual and communal freedom. Within this reality, CLAR saw that the evangelization by religious in Latin America had to focus on the change of social structures.

CLAR's understanding of religious life eventually saw consecration and mission as so intimately bound that they are, in reality, two sides of the same coin. CLAR viewed this as a wholistic way to view religious life, not artificially separating internal community life from external public evangelization. It was then only logical to seek an extension of the exemption for religious congregations to include their evangelization. CLAR's logic has a wonderful consistency. The unity of religious consecration and mission makes redundant the distinction between *ad intra* and *ad extra* aspects of religious life. A distinction which one wonders really exists in practice.

But in so doing does religious life become more liberated or more vulnerable? The Pope's right to exempt religious congregations from the authority of the local bishop has a long tradition in the Church. Its intent was to allow religious congregations to develop their own charism and more easily fulfill their mission without fear of interference from a local bishop.¹⁴⁷ Thus its intent was from the beginning to protect religious life from possible meddling by bishops.

Yet while consistent, CLAR's position makes religious life more vulnerable rather than liberating it. By removing the *ad intra* and *ad extra* distinctions which

147 V. Koluthara, *Rightful Autonomy of Religious Institutes*, p. 76. C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 2nd ed. (Longman: London, 1989): 136-138, 91. Lawrence states that before the 12th century this exemption was rare with the Cluniac Benedictines (1024) being the most famous exception.

Christus Dominus established, a fire wall is taken away which protects religious from intrusion by bishops into the internal life of communities. If the internal and external aspects of religious life are seen as inseparable, what is to stop a bishop from intervening into a religious community on the pretext of improving a congregation's evangelization? It is worth remembering Bishop Rodríguez and Cardinal Ratzinger's justifications for their intervention into the *Palabra-Vida* project. They, in effect, adopted CLAR's position (without saying so, of course) in order to judge *Palabra-Vida*, a project designed for internal use by religious communities.

CLAR finally sought to free religious life from any *a priori* limitations to its evangelizing activity, even to the extent of allowing partisan political actions. This issue is a sensitive one. It was first apparent through the resistance by CELAM to the 1972 CLAR study, *Vida religiosa y situación socio-política*. Yet CLAR never advocated the involvement by religious in political parties, and, in fact, had cautioned against this. What CLAR did support was an openness, so that religious in specific situations could engage in political actions, if necessary, in order to make a clear eschatological witness among the poor.

A part of the sensitivity on this issue is due to the lack of clarity about what precisely is meant by partisan political activity. CLAR, as this study showed, had offered a view to which CELAM reacted sharply. It may seem odd that the possible political activity by religious could still be a point of contention in 1989 between CLAR and the Vatican. Unlike the 1970s, no CLAR study becomes the focal point of conflict. Neither are religious still believing that imminent radical political change in Latin America is possible. But nonetheless it remains a sensitive issue, even mentioned by the Pope in his 1990 letter to Latin American religious.

Perhaps what is most interesting, and also central in seeing if CLAR's perspective is liberating, is where one begins. If one starts from the idea that all Christians have equal responsibilities and duties in the face of socio-political reality then CLAR's position liberates religious, while carefully preserving their ability to witness the Kingdom. If, however, one focuses on the division of competencies made by the Council between lay and religious in the Church's mission then CLAR's position is reductionist and not liberating.

Appendix: CLAR lives

In spite of the intervention into its government and the consequences which flowed from this action, CLAR continues its reflections on religious life and evangelization. But from 1991 until 1994 CLAR's freedom is restricted by a papal representative whose *imprimatur* is necessary for any CLAR publications. Although Bishop Hurtado is praised by CLAR and is no draconian censor, nonetheless CLAR's freedom is restricted.¹

The intent of the *Appendix* is very limited, namely to provide a general sketch of themes which emerge in CLAR's reflections after 1991. Thus there is neither analysis nor discussion but rather a brief presentation of themes which CLAR identifies as important.

1 Emergence of the woman religious

At the 1991 General Assembly, it becomes clear that women religious have been given insufficient attention. Through their praxis among the poor, women religious have shown themselves to be critically important to the evangelization efforts of the Latin American Church. CLAR recognizes that it needs to devote more attention to the situation of women as well as their perspective on the social reality and the Church.²

The rise of the woman religious is a key theme within CLAR from 1991 until 1994. Efforts are made to clearly articulate the feminine vision of the Latin American reality and their interpretation of the Bible. CLAR seeks to assist these efforts.³

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- 1 S. Ramírez et al., *Comprensión de las conclusiones de Santo Domingo*, Colección CLAR 61 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1993). Bishop Hurtado approved the publication of *Comprensión de las conclusiones* even though it contains some strong criticism of the Santo Domingo CELAM conference. B. Blanco, "Informe de presidencia [XXV Junta Directiva, Costa Rica]," *Boletín CLAR* 30:5-6 (mayo-junio 1992): 7. But a planned work by José Oscar Beozzo, *Evangelización y V Centenario* is not approved.
 - 2 CLAR, "Plan Global A. Líneas inspiradoras (1991-1994)," *Boletín CLAR* 29:8 (agosto 1991): 12-15.
 - 3 Equipo Teólogos CLAR, "Subsidio para los delegados/as de la vida religiosa a Santo Domingo," *Boletín CLAR* 30:8 (agosto 1992): 17-18. A. Roy, *Ser mujer. Algunas relecturas del libro del Génesis*, Colección Perspectivas 18 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1993). CLAR, "Seminario taller sobre la mujer," *Boletín CLAR* 31:10-11 (octubre-noviembre 1993): 6-27. L. Sebastiani, "Algunas figuras femeninas de la escritura en los momentos claves de la historia de la salvación," *Boletín CLAR* 30:7 (julio 1992): 3-6. S. Recchi, "La mujer en el derecho

The emergence of the women religious also can be seen on another level. At the 1994 CLAR General Assembly the delegates elect Sister Elza Ribeiro as president, the first woman chosen for the position.⁴

2 Inculturation of religious life

Concern about the inculturation of religious life remains. There is, however, a new focus for this concern, namely the need for religious to enter the indigenous and Afro-American cultures. There is a recognition that these cultures have been in the past too often ignored.⁵

CLAR also searches for new ways of understanding the Latin American cultures. This includes the use of scientific perspectives other than a socio-economic one. Especially important is a 1993 seminar on inculturation (Porto Alegre, Brazil) which CLAR sponsors along with the CRB.⁶

3 Reception of Santo Domingo

After the 1992 CELAM gathering in Santo Domingo CLAR begins its reception of the results. There is disappointment with the tone of the document, its abandonment of the *ver-juzgar-actuar* methodology, and its failure to address certain issues. Nonetheless, there is a desire to interpret Santo Domingo as a part of the tradition Medellín-Puebla.⁷

4 The ecclesial aspect of religious life

In the light of the Vatican intervention, there is once again concern to define the position of religious life within the Church. This concern is dual: to clarify its

eclesial," *ibid*, 7-9. J. Batista, "Historia de la vida religiosa femenina en Bolivia," *ibid*, 10-21. "El papel de la mujer en la sociedad, en la Iglesia y en la vida religiosa," *ibid*, 22-23. W. Morales, "La enseñanza de Jesús y la violencia contra la mujer," *ibid*, 24-25. L.C. Botero and D.O. García, "La mujer en la Iglesia a través de los 500 años de evangelización," *ibid*, 26-28. CLAR, "Líneas inspiradoras para el próximo Plan Global de la CLAR," *Boletín CLAR* 32:6 (junio 1994): 18.

- 4 CLAR, "A los presidentes y presidentas de las conferencias nacionales de religiosos [XII Asamblea General, México]," *Boletín CLAR* 32:6 (junio 1994): 4.
- 5 CLAR, "Proyecto no. 2 de la CLAR: Inculturación de la vida religiosa latinoamericana," *Boletín CLAR* 30:5-6 (mayo-junio 1992): 12-14. C. Mazzoleni, "La inculturación: Encarnación del Evangelio en las culturas," *Boletín CLAR* 29:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1991): 4-10. J.M. Arnaiz, "Para liberar, solidarizar e inculturar," *Boletín CLAR* 30:10 (octubre 1992): 2-15. CLAR, "Líneas inspiradoras para el próximo Plan Global," p. 12-15.
- 6 CLAR and CRB, "Vida religiosa inculturada," *Boletín CLAR* 32:1-2 (enero-febrero 1994): 3-34. Conferencia Boliviana de Religiosos y Religiosas, "Seminario taller sobre inculturación para los países andinos, Bolivia," *Boletín CLAR* 32:5 (mayo 1994): 3-15.
- 7 S. Ramírez et al., *Comprensión de las conclusiones de Santo Domingo*. V. Codina, *Teología simbólica de la tierra. Lectura del documento de Santo Domingo*, Colección CLAR 62 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1993). J. Castillo, "TV Conferencia de Santo Domingo, vida religiosa," *Boletín CLAR* 30:12 (diciembre 1992): 13-15. F. Taborda, "La vida religiosa y Santo Domingo," *Boletín CLAR* 30:11 (noviembre 1992): 2-9.

differences in relation to the laity, and the relationship of religious life to the hierarchy.⁸

5 Comunidades insertas

The *comunidades insertas* continue to receive the support of CLAR. But now CLAR's assistance is to aide the communities in overcoming the shocks brought on by the collapse of the Berlin Wall (leaving no visible alternative to capitalism) and the democracy brought by neo-liberalism.

The witness and praxis of courageous wo(men) religious in the *comunidades insertas* continues. But there is a search for a spirituality which sustains their life in a social reality with little prospect of change and in which the poor are further impoverished.⁹ Finally, there is within the Colección CLAR series a book focusing on the involvement of religious in the *CEBS*.¹⁰

6 Evangelization

There is within CLAR discussions a continued concern for the evangelization by religious. This is marked by several shifts which are apparent.

First, the recognition of challenges to evangelization which were previously given little attention: the rise of fundamentalist sects, the limits of dependency theory, and the need for evangelization in a context of cultural pluralism.¹¹ There is also growing concern for modernity which is now affecting all social sectors of Latin America.¹²

Second, while maintaining an option for the poor, religious broaden their concerns to other social classes. The middle class is viewed as needing evangelization and

8 C. Mesters, "Eclesialidad y misión. Reflexiones a partir de la Biblia," *Boletín CLAR* 30:9 (septiembre 1992): 2-19. USG, "La vida consagrada hoy: Carismas en la Iglesia para el mundo," *Boletín CLAR* 32:4 (abril 1994): 3-26. S. Ryan et al., *Retos de la vida religiosa. Hacia el 2.000*, Colección CLAR 64 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1994): 151-187, 243-269. C. Palmés, *Nueva espiritualidad de la vida religiosa en América Latina*, Colección CLAR 63 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1993).

9 CLAR, "Plan Global A. Líneas inspiradoras (1991-1994)," p. 17-19. Conferencia de Religiosos de Ecuador, "Memoria del II encuentro nacional de CRIMPO. Cumbayá, Ecuador," *Boletín CLAR* 31:1 (enero 1993): 2-11.

10 R. Oliveros, *Seguimiento de Cristo en las comunidades de base*, Colección CLAR 66 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1994).

11 F. Taborda, *Evangelización para el Tercer Milenio*, Colección CLAR 65 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1994): 131-138.

12 Equipe Teólogos CLAR, "Subsidio para ...Santo Domingo," p. 11. E. Valle, "Polarização e enfases da vida religiosa no contexto da XVI AGO," *Convergência* (1992): 594-595. Valle (a former CLAR vice president), speaking before an assembly of the Brazilian Religious Conference, says that the focus on the option for the poor led religious to neglect the problems of modernity. Similar: A. Antoniazzi, "Como repensar a pastoral face aos desafios de modernidade?" *Convergência* (1992): 40-57.

as a potential ally with the poor for the transformation of Latin American society.¹³

7 Ecology and the option for the poor

There is a reaffirmation of the option for the poor and now a realization that defense of the poor's rights has an ecological dimension. In order to protect the poor it is seen that religious have to help protect the environment in which they live.¹⁴

13 C. Boff, *Pastoral de la clase media en la perspectiva de la liberación*, Colección CLAR 60 (Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1992).

14 "II Seminário justiça, paz y ecología," *Boletín CLAR* 32:9-10 (septiembre-octubre 1994): 5-35. V. Codina, *Teología simbólica de la tierra. Lectura del documento de Santo Domingo*. CLAR, "Líneas inspiradoras para el próximo Plan Global," p. 15-16.

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Deze studie analyseert de theologische reflecties vanuit de Latijns Amerikaanse Confederatie van Religieuzen (CLAR) van 1966 tot 1991 om te zien of er een contextuele theologie van het religieuze leven werd ontwikkeld.

De belangrijkheid van CLAR ligt in haar unieke plaats in Latijns Amerika. CLAR is een canonic opgerichte confederatie van Latijns Amerikaanse conferenties van religieuzen die werd opgericht in 1959. In 1966 verzocht de Congregatie voor Religieuze en Seculiere Instituten CLAR om de vernieuwing van het religieuze leven in Latijns Amerika te helpen bevorderen. CLAR aanvaarde deze verantwoordelijkheid en trachtte de innerlijke vernieuwing van religieuze congregaties en hun aanpassing aan Latijns Amerika te bevorderen. Door haar publikaties en de verslagen van de bijeenkomsten van de Algemene Vergadering en het Algemene Bestuur biedt CLAR een forum voor de belangen en inzichten van religieuzen uit heel Latijns Amerika. Maar de betekenis van CLAR ligt ook in haar institutionele keuzes, want het pleiten van CLAR voor vernieuwing van het religieuze leven leidt tot het innemen van bepaalde standpunten die soms controversieel zijn en in botsing komen met de hiërarchie.

Deze studie erkent dat er gebrek aan consensus bestaat over de betekenis van de term "contextuele theologie". Daarom neemt deze studie als structuur het begrip van de contextuele theologie van J. Van Nieuwenhove en B. Klein Goldewijk. Aldus wordt wat CLAR heeft geschreven in publikaties geanalyseerd om te zien of er een contextuele theologie van het religieuze leven valt te ontdekken die, 1) een of andere vorm van sociale wetenschap gebruikt voor de analyse van de context, 2) het perspectief van de armen overneemt als theologische hermeneutiek, 3) een gemeenschap achter zich heeft staan waaruit de theologie voortkomt die door theologen wordt verwoord, 4) relevant is voor de Latijns Amerikaanse context, 5) bevrijdend is en zich ook met enige wereldwijde aangelegenheden bezig houdt.

Met betrekking tot deze studie wordt relevantie gezien als een poging van een theologie om de *tekens van de tijd* in de lopende geschiedenis te identificeren binnen een specifieke context. "Bevrijdend" wordt in de eerste plaats gebruikt met betrekking tot het innerlijke religieuze leven: hoe kunnen religieus leven, interne structuren, theologische opvattingen en evangelisatie bevrijd worden, zodat religieuzen kunnen deelnemen aan de bevrijding van de armen. Bovendien kiest deze studie voor een ruime opvatting van het religieuze leven en houdt zich niet bezig met de canonieke onderscheidingen tussen ordes, congregaties en instituten.

Structuur van de studie

Deze studie is verdeeld in vijf delen, samengesteld uit dertien hoofdstukken. Deze draaien rond de vier gebeurtenissen die hun invloed hebben uitgeoefend op de theologische reflecties van CLAR: het Tweede Vaticaans Concilie, Medellín (1968), Puebla (1979) en de Vaticaanse interventie in CLAR (1989).

Hoofdstuk één concentreert zich op de vraag hoe CLAR in het begin inging op de oproep van het Tweede Vaticaans Concilie tot vernieuwing van het religieuze leven en de aanpassing daarvan aan de moderne wereld. In die korte periode van 1966 tot 1968 behandelt CLAR het religieuze leven en zijn evangelisatie niet systematisch. Toch komen er dan kwesties naar voren die het denken van CLAR zullen gaan beheersen: over het verstaan van de Latijns Amerikaanse sociaal-politieke en culturele context, de praktijk van de evangelische armoede, en het zoeken naar een vorm van evangelisatie die tegemoet komt aan de noden van Latijns Amerika, terwijl ze tegelijkertijd de religieuzen in staat stelt om het Koninkrijk te manifesteren.

Hoofdstuk twee analyseert hoe de tweede CELAM Conferentie in Medellín door CLAR werd ontvangen. In wat CLAR geschreven heeft wordt het duidelijk dat Latijns Amerikaanse religieuzen op zoek zijn naar een perspectief van waaruit zij de maatschappelijke realiteit van hun continent kunnen interpreteren. Er komen drie verschillende visies op de Latijns Amerikaanse maatschappelijke realiteit naar voren, die voortvloeien uit verschillende sociologische perspectieven. De ene identificeert de secularisatie als de meest dringende uitdaging waarvoor Latijns Amerika en het religieuze leven staan. Een andere visie identificeert afhankelijke sociale structuren, gekoppeld aan internationale systemen die de Derde Wereld uitbuiten, als de grootste uitdaging. Een derde visie tenslotte ziet Latijns Amerika vanuit een vrouwelijk perspectief dat Latijns Amerikaanse cultuur beziet als één die vrouwen onderdrukt en de behoefte aan "vrouwelijke waarden" ontkent. In elk van deze drie perspectieven wordt een uitdaging voor de religieuzen gezien om hun innerlijk leven en hun theologisch zelfverstaan te veranderen ten einde daarop in te gaan en ook een duidelijk getuigenis van het Koninkrijk te geven in de context van Latijns Amerika.

Hoofdstuk drie bekijkt hoe deze drie visies, geïdentificeerd in hoofdstuk twee, van invloed zijn op de evangelisatie. Vanuit het secularisatie perspectief bestaat er over het algemene weinig belangstelling voor evangelisatie. Dit perspectief is voornamelijk geconcentreerd op de behoefte aan verbetering in het innerlijk leven van religieuze gemeenschappen om de blijvende waarde ervan in de geseculariseerde wereld opnieuw te bevestigen. Vanuit het vrouwelijke perspectief en dat van afhankelijkheid ziet men bepaalde gemeenschappelijke uitdagingen waarop elke evangelisatie in Latijns Amerika in moet gaan. In verband hiermee wordt een pastorale visie beschreven die wordt gezien als een reactie inhoudend op deze uitdagingen.

Hoofdstuk vier richt de aandacht op de theologische grondslagen van het religieuze leven. Verschillende punten worden besproken die beschouwd worden als ten grondslag liggend aan alle religieuze leven, maar zonder een direct verband met de maatschappelijke werkelijkheid van Latijns Amerika. Men ziet er de bezorgdheid om de evangelische armoede en stelt de vraag of het religieuze leven voor zijn levensvorm een aanspraak kan maken op bijbelse ondersteuning. Toch wordt het grootste gedeelte van hoofdstuk vier in beslag genomen door een analyse van *La vida según el Espíritu*, dat de belangrijkste CLAR studie is. *La vida según el Espíritu* biedt een heldere en systematische visie op de identiteit van het religieuze leven, en behandelt: de evangelische raden, het charisma van het religieuze leven, de gemeente en de navolging van Jesus. Heel frappant is het dat volgens *La vida según el Espíritu* de basis van het religieuze leven niet gevonden kan worden in de evangelische raden, maar eerder in een Godservaring die leidt tot de navolging van Jesus in woord en daad.

Na 1974 is de eerdere pluraliteit van perspectieven op de werkelijkheid van Latijns Amerika verdwenen. CLAR heeft voor het afhankelijkheidsperspectief gekozen als het meest relevante voor religieuzen in de context van Latijns Amerika. Als grootste uitdaging op dit continent wordt de onderdrukking gezien, die is veroorzaakt door afhankelijke maatschappelijke structuren waarvan Latijns Amerika moet bevrijd worden. Met deze keuze groeit het besef dat het religieuze leven vervreemd is van het Latijns Amerikaanse volk, omdat bourgeois opvattingen uit het verleden werden overgenomen, met als gevolg dat de religieuze levensvorm en spiritualiteit op vele manieren van Latijns Amerika vervreemd zijn.

Hoofdstuk vijf toont aan dat de discussie over de Latijns Amerikaanse maatschappij na 1974 wordt voortgezet. Religieuzen tonen belangstelling voor de vraag hoe de maatschappelijke structuren in Latijns Amerika, en de onderdrukking van armen die zij tot gevolg hebben, op de meest heldere wijze kunnen worden geanalyseerd. Zij richten hun aandacht op de overheersende ideologie en de aanvaarding ervan middels de gangbare socialisatie-processen. Maatschappij-analyse, verandering van sociale 'locatie', praxis en filosofie worden geïdentificeerd als praktische en theoretische stappen, die religieuzen in staat stellen zich te bevrijden van de overheersende ideologie en een scherper zicht te krijgen op de onderdrukking in Latijns Amerika.

CLAR ziet in dat de identiteit van het religieuze leven opnieuw geformuleerd moet worden vanuit de wereld van de armen. Hoofdstuk zes onderzoekt dit. Door contacten met de armen en steun aan hun bevrijding schenkt het begrip van het religieuze leven zoals we dit aantreffen in *La vida según el Espíritu* diepere inzichten. Onder de armen denkt men dat religieuzen de bekwaamheid kunnen herwinnen om een profetisch getuigenis te geven van het Koninkrijk, bij te dragen aan de bevrijding van de armen, en ook het religieuze leven te incarneren in Latijns Amerikaanse vormen en spiritualiteit.

Hoofdstuk zeven legt de nadruk op de invloed die deze keuze voor de afhankelijkheidsanalyse heeft op de evangelisatie van religieuzen. CLAR verbindt zich met de ontwikkeling en het in praktijk brengen van een bevrijdende evangelisatie, die verstaan wordt als een breuk met bestaande evangelisatie praktijken. In toenemende mate gaan de aandacht en interesse van CLAR uit naar de *comunidades insertas*, die zij ziet als een nieuw model van religieus leven waarin zaken die het innerlijk leven van een gemeenschap betreffen worden verbonden met evangelisatie onder de armen.

In de publikaties van CLAR vindt men geen heldere bespreking van de *comunidades insertas* noch van 'insertie', noch van de gemeenschappelijke elementen die hen verbinden. De hoofdstukken acht en negen vormen in deze studie een tijdelijke onderbreking in de chronologische behandeling van CLAR's reflecties om deze gemeenschappen nauwkeurig te analyseren.

Hoofdstuk acht vindt vier verschillende vormen van *comunidades insertas* die men in Latijns Amerika aantreft. Terwijl zij gemeenschappelijke trekken delen, hebben deze gemeenschappen verschillende ideeën over hun leven van 'insertie' en de grenzen van hun evangelisatie. In Latijns Amerika ontwikkelt zich een unieke vorm van *comunidad inserta* uit de mislukte ervaringen van de "kleine gemeenschappen". Deze Latijns Amerikaanse, op bevrijding gerichte *comunidad inserta* streeft ernaar, het religieuze leven opnieuw te laten wortelen onder de armen en een actieve bijdrage te laten leveren aan de bevrijding van de armen.

Hoofdstuk negen volgt met een nauwkeurig onderzoek van de Latijns Amerikaanse, op bevrijding gerichte *comunidades insertas*. Daaruit blijkt dat ze op uiteenlopende wijzen van de andere drie vormen van 'insertie' verschillen. Verder kennen deze *comunidades insertas* unieke spanningen die voortkomen uit hun status als vernieuwingsbeweging, die de grenzen van religieuze congregaties doorbreekt. Interessant hierbij is, dat deze *comunidades insertas* in overgrote meerderheid door vrouwelijke religieuzen zijn gesticht.

De derde conferentie van CELAM te Puebla (1979) oefent een belangrijke invloed uit op de reflecties van CLAR. Hoofdstuk tien onderzoekt hoe CLAR Puebla heeft ontvangen. Het komt tot de bevinding dat CLAR het slotdocument van Puebla interpreteert vanuit het oogpunt van samenhang met Medellín; een vernieuwende verbinding legt tussen de optie voor de armen en het thema "gemeenschap en deelname"; en in Puebla een bevestiging ziet van haar eigen theologische standpunten ten aanzien van het religieuze leven. Verder van belang is het feit dat CLAR, na Puebla, een actieve en enthousiaste verdedigster wordt van de *comunidades insertas*. Deze *comunidades* worden beschouwd als een vorm van religieus leven, die zowel de vervreemding van religieuzen van het Latijns Amerikaanse volk zou kunnen overwinnen als een steun verlenen aan de bevrijding van de armen.

Hoofdstuk elf analyseert hoe CLAR zich bezint op het religieuze leven en de evangelisatie in de periode tussen Puebla en de eerste Vaticaanse interventie. CLAR's gedachten over het innerlijke religieuze leven kunnen niet meer scherp gescheiden worden van die over de evangelisatie. Wat in het religieuze leven van belang is voor het innerlijk leven wordt beschouwd als onafscheidelijk verbonden met evangelisatie. Draaiende om de hoofdthema's uit *La vida según el Espíritu* en de praxis van de *comunidades insertas*, houden de reflecties van CLAR zich bezig met aangelegenheden van het verleden als ook met nieuwe uitdagingen. Wat haar hoofdzakelijk bezig houdt zijn de interpretatie van het charisma van de stichters en stichteressen, de inculturatie van het religieuze leven, de ontwikkeling van een spiritualiteit van 'insertie' en verschillende interpretaties van de Nieuwe Evangelisatie.

Toch ontwikkelen de reflecties van CLAR zich, vooral na 1972, in een toegenomen spanning in de verhouding met CELAM. Radicale verschillen tussen CLAR en de hiërarchie zijn op meerdere gebieden duidelijk. Ter discussie staan: de relatie van religieuzen met de bisschoppen, vooral op het terrein van de evangelisatie, de *comunidades insertas* en rivaliserende visies op het religieuze leven. Deze spanningen sudderen vele jaren voort en komen in 1989 tot uitbarsting over twee punten: het *Palabra-Vida* bijbellezing-project en de benoeming van een opvolger voor het ambt van secretaris-generaal van CLAR. Hoofdstuk twaalf concentreert zich op deze spanningen en de serie interventies door het Magisterium in het bestuur van CLAR, tussen 1989 en 1991. Ten gevolge van deze acties wordt het project *Palabra-Vida* stopgezet en de invloed over heel het continent van de theologen van CLAR beperkt. Ook worden de activiteiten van CLAR stilgelegd en doet er zich een conflict voor tussen de leiders van CLAR en de door het Vaticaan benoemde secretaris-generaal Jorge Jiménez. CLAR wordt als organisatie op de knieën gebracht en gaat bijna ten onder.

De interventie door het Vaticaan wordt niet als een alleenstaande daad begrepen en ook niet als enkel maar een poging om een eind te maken aan de verdediging van de bevrijdingstheologie door CLAR. In plaats daarvan beziet deze studie CLAR en het Magisterium als rivaliserende instanties die, op wezenlijke punten, met elkaar strijdige interpretaties van het Tweede Vaticaanse Concilie verdedigen. De verschillen tussen de twee vallen op te maken uit een analyse van documenten van het Magisterium, vooral die welke de Paus vermeldde in zijn brief van 1990 aan de Latijns Amerikaanse religieuzen.

Hoofdstuk dertien besluit deze studie. Met de Vaticaanse interventie als achtergrond probeert deze studie antwoord te geven op de vraag die in de inleiding werd gesteld: heeft CLAR een contextuele theologie van het religieuze leven geformuleerd, daarbij gebruik makend van de omschrijving van Van Nieuwenhove en Klein Goldewijk. De conclusie van deze studie is, dat CLAR een contextuele theologie van het religieuze leven heeft ontwikkeld, die gebruik maakt van een maatschappij-analyse, de optie voor de armen hanteert als hermeneutisch principe,

en de *comunidades insertas* beschouwt als subject van theologie. De theologische standpunten van CLAR blijken relevant en bevrijdend te zijn geweest, ofschoon soms met ernstige consequenties. Op verschillende punten tenslotte neemt CLAR standpunten in die van wereldomvattend belang zijn voor het religieuze leven; voor zijn identiteit (innerlijk leven) en zijn inzet voor de evangelisatie.

[Vertaling uit het Californiaans: Wim Wolke, ofm]

Curriculum vitae

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This study traces the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR) evolving understandings of religious life and its evangelization. Reflecting upon the Second Vatican Council, Medellín, Puebla and praxis among the poor, CLAR recognizes that religious need to understand their life in relation to the concrete context of oppression which marked Latin America. Over time CLAR eventually becomes an advocate of the *comunidades insertas* (i.e. inserted communities) and to what can be seen as a contextual theology of religious life. CLAR's efforts are done amidst growing tensions with the Latin American hierarchy and these reach a critical point in 1989 with the magisterial intervention into CLAR's governance.



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